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Community Strategic Plan

JUNE 10, 2004

The logo consists of a cluster of overlapping, semi-transparent orange and yellow geometric shapes, resembling a stylized map or a cluster of buildings.

MARKET STREET SERVICES
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Overview

OVERVIEW

Although the U.S. economy in mid-2004 is showing signs of finally revisiting the strong growth and job creation numbers of previous expansions, the recovery has not been equally distributed amongst all communities and regions. While a number of major metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Georgia and Austin, Texas are home to thousands of new jobs, small regions and rural communities continue to see local unemployment rates in the high single digits and low teens, and have yet to experience the industrial expansions of past decades.

Many national and international experts caution that certain new dynamics affecting the global economy will lead to a permanent restructuring of U.S. industrial sectors. In February 2004, the U.S. manufacturing sector ended 42 consecutive months of job losses. The sector has added 27,000 net jobs in 2004. Even so, advances in technology, manufacturing process improvements, a growing overseas workforce trained to do many manufacturing and service jobs at a fraction of the cost of U.S. workers, and other conditions are completely redefining how American companies do business. As a result, formerly low-cost alternatives like many rural Southern communities are no longer competitive in many of the industries that traditionally created most of the employment in these areas. Progressive communities are redefining their strategic positions to reemphasize education and workforce development as prime criteria of local competitiveness. Communities are reexamining their local assets and fitting them to growth sectors such as health care, tourism and distribution.

The rules of the economic development game are changing as the nation shifts from a manufacturing base to an economy focused on information and services industries. Communities that do not adapt to these changes risk being left behind as the U.S. and global economies move towards a future of high-speed connectivity, global trade, and just-in-time delivery systems.

Losses in textile and furniture manufacturing and tobacco employment have devastated the Halifax County economy in recent years, with unemployment remaining above or near 10 percent, and social services and workforce development providers increasingly strained by a population in need of additional services. However, local success stories like the development of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHED), The Prizery, and Riverstone Technology Park are proof of the commitment of Halifax County leaders and residents to the ongoing vitality of their community.

As part of a grassroots effort to define Halifax County's future potential, the Halifax County Chamber of Commerce has initiated a process called **Vision 2020**, a community-wide initiative to define the County's action plan for future growth and development. To initiate the next phase of **Vision 2020**, the Chamber retained *Market Street Services*, a national economic and workforce development consulting firm based in Atlanta, Georgia, to facilitate the strategic process in Halifax County. At the end of the three-month effort, Halifax County will have created a strategic vision and action plan to map the area's path

to short- and long-term growth. The development of this strategic vision in Halifax County is a four-step process involving the following components:

1. **Competitive Realities:** A document focused on recent economic trends, local economic sectors, community demographic data, and Halifax County's competitive climate as it relates to education and workforce development; business costs; infrastructure; and quality of life.
2. **Community Input:** *Market Street* heard from over a thousand Halifax County stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, online surveys and community leadership meetings. This qualitative input informed both the *Competitive Realities* assessment and the *Community Strategic Plan*.
3. **Community Strategic Plan:** Incorporating all research completed to this point, this strategic plan establishes goals, objectives and action steps to develop short-term job growth, and long-term economic sustainability in Halifax County. Benchmarks and performance measures will ensure that the plan is initiated and monitored successfully.
4. **Implementation Guidelines:** Leveraging *Market Street's* many years of expertise, the firm will assist Halifax County in reviewing the area's existing economic and community development capacity, and provide recommendations and suggested program enhancements to effectively implement the *Community Strategic Plan*.

This report comprises the third component of the process, the *Community Strategic Plan*. The plan provides a blueprint for Halifax County's sustainable growth in the short-term, and longer-term, to ensure that area resources are focused most effectively on local job and wealth creation goals.

The final stage of the process is the development of the plan's *Implementation Guidelines*. This document will focus on the agencies, actors and efforts needed to successfully implement the action steps recommended in the *Community Strategic Plan*.



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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Halifax County is a dynamic community. In every focus group and interview conducted by *Market Street*, respondents expressed their high regard for the quality of the people in the County, and noted residents' commitment to improve the area in whatever way possible. It is a caring community – a kind place where people still wave to you on the street and neighbors help neighbors. From a region that developed on the bootstraps of local farmers and laborers, to one that later diversified into various manufacturing sectors, Halifax County has always found a new engine for local job creation. However, the final years of the 1990s and first third of the new decade have been difficult on the local economy. Hemisphere-wide and global trade pacts have resulted in dynamic shifts in the underlying structure of the U.S., Virginia, and local economy, leading to large-scale job losses in Halifax County, factory closings, lingering unemployment, and general uncertainty over future prospects.

Quantitative and qualitative research to date on Halifax County has led to an assessment of the community's current economic and demographic realities. Among these findings are:

- ✓ While Halifax County has a number of local strengths, a changing national economic structure and over-reliance on traditional manufacturing makes the community vulnerable to further job losses.
- ✓ Measures of local educational capacity and attainment have improved notably over the past years, but continuing demographic realities and a lack of available local jobs are threatening the effective development of Halifax County's future workforce.
- ✓ There are programs in place to improve local workforce quality, but efforts must be expanded to ensure that existing and future companies have access to a highly skilled, motivated and technologically savvy labor pool.
- ✓ More must also be done to cultivate local entrepreneurs and small business owners. With the majority of jobs created in small companies, these fledgling entrepreneurs are key to the sustainability and growth of Halifax County's economy. Existing companies must also be provided with all the attention and resources they need to remain competitive and expand.
- ✓ While poverty rates in Halifax County have decreased and remain roughly equivalent to Virginia averages, local wage and per capita income growth have been stagnant, and must be improved to increase local wealth and attract the retail amenities characteristic of today's most successful communities.
- ✓ With Halifax County's population decreasing, young people leaving the community, and the County's average age rising, revitalization of the local economy through enhanced job-creation capacity is key to reversing these demographic trends.

- ✓ The costs of living and doing business in Halifax County are very competitive relative to same-sized communities in Southside Virginia and elsewhere. These advantages, along with a capable transportation and utilities infrastructure, should be maintained and enhanced to enable the community to attract and retain the New Economy companies that will provide future job and income growth.
- ✓ Quality of life in Halifax County is a local strength. Available cultural, recreational, and sports-related resources provide area residents with a number of options for local entertainment, and are robust for a community of this size. In addition to current amenities like Virginia International Raceway, South Boston Speedway, and Downtown South Boston, soon-to-be-completed projects like The Prizery and Berry Hill will greatly enhance the County's quality of life infrastructure, and serve as powerful draws for relocating companies and potential new residents. Even so, as is common in many rural communities, a lack of "things to do" for area youth creates the risk of losing these young people to other, more vibrant areas.

In response to these realities, Halifax County's *Community Strategic Plan* will be broad in scope, but clear in vision. It will be a holistic framework for quality development, encompassing economic target sectors and funding sources, and also community capacity, efforts to improve workforce quality, and various areas of demographic concern. To facilitate quality economic development in Halifax County, *Market Street* recommends pursuit of the following five goals and associated objectives:

Goal 1: A Sustainable Economy

Develop a diversified economic base to create quality new jobs and increase local wealth in the short-term, and ensure economic sustainability in the long-term.

- Objective 1: Support the development and expansion of identified Target Business Clusters.
- Objective 2: Create and implement a consensus-based, best management practice Agricultural Sustainability Program.
- Objective 3: Ensure that local businesses have the resources needed to expand.
- Objective 4: Promote entrepreneurial development and small business expansion.
- Objective 5: Enhance partnerships for economic development.

Goal 2: Education and Workforce Development

Create the capacity necessary to develop a highly skilled, well-trained, technologically focused workforce to serve existing and future Halifax County businesses.

- Objective 1: Develop a comprehensive community-wide plan for local educational improvement.
- Objective 2: Maximize the impact of workforce development programs and augment resources for worker retraining and job placement.

Goal 3: Infrastructure Development and Land Use Coordination

Develop the infrastructure necessary for Halifax County to be competitive while preserving the rural character that makes the community unique.

- Objective 1:** Coordinate public and private efforts to develop enhanced technology, utilities and transportation infrastructure.
- Objective 2:** Ensure that vital Halifax County farmland is preserved, along with valuable open space and vistas.

Goal 4: Leadership and Vision

Utilize the full breadth of current and potential Halifax County leadership to boost local morale, build trust, and maximize cooperation between all regional constituencies.

- Objective 1:** Develop increased capacity for local leadership.
- Objective 2:** Enhance the community morale of Halifax County residents.
- Objective 3:** Work to build greater trust, cooperation and effective partnerships between South Boston and Halifax County leadership.

Goal 5: Quality of Life

Make Halifax County a healthy, vibrant community where existing residents can thrive, and businesses and individuals want to locate.

- Objective 1:** Increase the social services and public assistance capacity in Halifax County.
- Objective 2:** Work to improve local health issues.
- Objective 3:** Augment Halifax County's stock of athletic fields, formal parkspaces and recreational amenities.
- Objective 4:** Broaden the entertainment options available to Halifax County teens and young adults.

The development and selection of the final strategic goals and objectives were coordinated by the Halifax County Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from a wide variety of local public and private constituencies.

This group also finalized the development of a **Vision Statement** for the area. The Statement reads:

Halifax County is a dynamic community, working through unity and cooperation toward a stronger economic future and an enhanced quality of life. Educational and workforce excellence drives our strategy for job creation and a diversified economy. Strong values, a sense of community, abundant recreational and cultural resources, and effective partnerships make Halifax County a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

This Vision Statement will serve as a bellwether for the ongoing implementation of the *Community Strategic Plan*. It represents a synthesis of Halifax County's overall strategic mission, and can be used to gauge the applicability of future improvement efforts.

The Steering Committee will also work to develop first-year, and longer-term priority actions for the plan, and assist in additional components of strategy implementation.



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Methodology

METHODOLOGY

This strategy details the action steps required to accomplish the five program goals and associated objectives derived from analysis of Halifax County's *Competitive Realities* and *Community Input* processes. While the focus of the community's strategy will be short-term gains in employment and local wealth, sustainable community performance in the long-term is also a key criterion for any successful strategy.

Benchmarks and Performance Measures

Each strategic goal will have accompanying benchmarks and suggested performance measures recommended to gauge the impact of individual action steps. These monitoring criteria enable economic developers to keep tabs on the progress of strategy elements and determine if additional measures are needed to reach Halifax County's future goals. Because the County's strategic plan is a "living" document, it will change and adapt over time to shifting economic, political and social conditions. Monitoring the progress of each strategic component will enable local decision-makers to determine the effect of policies and programs on overall community goals, and also if elements of the plan need to be expanded, contracted or altered.

"Benchmarks" are loosely defined by the Urban Institute as *measures of what can be expected*.¹ They can be broad, as in "improved graduation rates for Minority students," or very specific: "Minority graduation rates will improve 10 percent by 2005." A "performance measurement" is defined as a *measurement on a regular basis of the results (outcomes) and efficiency of services or programs*.² In the case of Halifax County's *Community Strategic Plan*, these measurements will reflect progress made in implementing the action steps and targeted sector improvements selected by the Steering Committee. But, as the Urban Institute notes, performance measurements do have limitations: They cannot reveal the full extent to which a program *caused* the measured results; they cannot measure certain non-quantifiable outcomes like an area's "culture of entrepreneurship;" and they do not replace the need for basic expenditure data, political judgment, good management, creativity, etc., in the decision-making process. However, performance measurements can nevertheless identify trends, and trends can indicate progress, or the lack of it.

Performance measurements are essentially the tools used to gauge the achievement of benchmarks. Taken together, the performance measures and benchmarks in this strategy document are intended to guide decision-makers along the path to sustainable economic development. While every attempt was made to ensure that the benchmarks and performance measures included in this document are as exhaustive as possible, Halifax County is encouraged to monitor the progress of this strategy to the level of detail they see fit. For example, while "dropout rate" is included as a performance measure, this

¹ Ibid, p. 119.

² Hatry, Harry P. *Performance Measurement: Getting Results*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1999, p. 3.

index can be broken down by individual grade to determine the exact point where the majority of local students are leaving the school system. In addition, analyzing the size and type of educational achievement gaps across race and income category can provide more specific and detailed tracking data than may be suggested in generalized performance measures for this strategy.

Target Business Cluster Analysis

Community leaders seeking to improve their local economy must grow familiar with the predominant business sectors in their area and how these sectors interact both inside and outside the region. These business sectors, also known as *clusters*, are “a geographically proximate group of companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities.”³ Understanding the dynamics of area clusters enables local economic developers and elected officials to take the steps necessary to stimulate growth in these industry sectors.

Business clusters emerge because firms in the same or closely related industry sector gain competitive advantages by co-locating in the same vicinity. Close associations with like firms allow businesses to learn about new technologies or important developments within the sector, create (and often share) an effectively trained labor pool, and reduce transaction costs. By increasing the productivity of the entire cluster, these interactions also hold the potential to significantly improve the local economy.

Over the last decade, business cluster analysis has been increasingly used to learn about the connections between business sectors and how these sectors operate in a dynamic global economy. Collaboration and knowledge-sharing have become vital because, in this information-based economy, *productivity* has replaced low cost inputs, such as cheap labor or land costs, as the key competitive factor for businesses. Clusters have been found to increase productivity because of the following factors:⁴

- Improved access to workers and suppliers;
- Access to a flow of specialized information about cluster businesses (i.e. effective business strategies, performance measures, other technical information);
- Complementary relationships that benefit cluster members;
- Access to relevant institutions and public investments; and
- Exposure to competitors that enhances motivation and performance measurement.

Identifying specific target clusters requires both quantitative *and* qualitative research. *Quantitative* examination of indicators like local employment and wages compared to national averages determines the scale and impact of specific business sectors. These data are collected according to North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS)

³ *On Competition*, Dr. Michael Porter, Harvard University Business School.

⁴ *Ibid.*

codes from the 2001 U.S. Census Bureau’s *County Business Patterns* surveys.⁵ NAICS classifies businesses into sectors similar to the now defunct Standard Industrial Codes system, but in categories more closely aligned with today’s service-oriented economy. Twenty different divisions represent the broadest NAICS codes. These divisions and their corresponding NAICS codes are:

<i>Division</i>	<i>NAICS Code</i>
• Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Agriculture Support.....	11
• Mining.....	21
• Utilities.....	22
• Construction.....	23
• Manufacturing.....	31-33
• Wholesale Trade.....	42
• Retail Trade.....	44-45
• Transportation & Warehousing.....	48-49
• Information.....	51
• Finance & Insurance.....	52
• Real Estate & Rental & Leasing.....	53
• Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services.....	54
• Management of Companies & Enterprises.....	55
• Administration, Support, Waste Management, Remediation Svcs.....	56
• Educational Services.....	61
• Health Care & Social Assistance.....	62
• Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation.....	71
• Accommodation & Food Services.....	72
• Other Services (except public administration).....	81
• Auxiliaries (exc. corporate, subsidiary & regional management).....	95

An important quantitative term used in this report is *location quotient* (LQ). A location quotient is a ratio representing the strength of a particular local business sector in relation to the national average. It is represented formulaically as:

$$LQ = \frac{(\text{Regional Employment in Sector} / \text{Total Regional Employment})}{(\text{National Employment in Sector} / \text{Total National Employment})}$$

If a location quotient is *greater* than 1.0, the area has a larger share of employment in that sector than the nation. The higher the LQ, the more concentrated the level of local employment compared to its U.S. equivalent. LQs provide insight into a community’s economic structure and its level of industrial diversity. If one or two sectors dominate local employment, slowdowns in these industries may decimate an area’s economy.

⁵ Data from *County Business Patterns* are sometimes suppressed, or only ranges of employment size are listed, if the information provided would compromise the identity of a particular employer. When this occurred in this report, the midpoint of a data range was used to provide a single employment figure.

Conversely, if a location quotient is *less* than 1.0, this indicates a smaller local share of employment than the nation. Just because a sector has a location quotient below 1.0 does not preclude it from being a target business cluster for the community. Similarly, an LQ over 1.0 does not automatically mean the community should aim for that sector. A number of factors, including national trends, local support services, and regional clusters, contribute to the viability of a local industry group.

Another important concept in local economic development is the *traded*, or *export* sector. A traded sector is a community's economic engine – that part of the economy that sells goods and services to customers outside the region, importing income that then circulates throughout the rest of the local economy. For example, manufacturing is a traded sector in Halifax County because these goods are sold outside the region. The “new” money entering the economy is then used to purchase local goods and services, creating new wealth in Halifax County. Conversely, retail is considered a *non-traded* sector because those monies originate within the community and have no “multiplier effect” on other spending. Local economic developers should always strive to recruit and develop traded industries because these sectors have a greater benefit to overall community vitality.

Qualitative research is also necessary in cluster analysis because firms that support and service specific business sectors may be part of that sector's cluster, though not directly categorized under the same NAICS code. *Market Street* conducted extensive qualitative research in Halifax County through numerous focus groups, interviews, and two Community Surveys. This information also informed the determination of the County's target industries.



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**Goal 1: A Sustainable
Economy**

GOAL 1: A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Objective 1: Support the development and expansion of identified Target Business Clusters

The target sectors discussed in the following pages represent stable, growing industries in which Halifax County has an existing – or potential – competitive advantage. The sectors are broad and diverse, incorporating an array of different skill-sets and educational attainment levels so that Halifax County’s growth can benefit all segments of the community. Policies and programs intended to facilitate the development of Halifax County’s clusters must aim to expand upon the community’s current advantages and trends. Leveraging existing business and educational resources will enable Halifax County to better understand the dynamics of successful local companies and how these processes can help build a larger cluster of like firms.

A cluster strategy cannot be general. It must focus on specific business sectors or it will fail to effectively address these sectors’ unique characteristics and needs. Understanding the core competencies and best-practice processes of area clusters will enable local developers to proceed with specific programs oriented towards the needs of Halifax County’s target industries.

Health Care

Description

As the “baby boom” generation ages, an increasing number of individuals in this populous group will require medical services, hospital and at-home care, and will purchase trillions of dollars worth of medications, medical devices and other health related products. U.S. health care consumption rose from 7 percent of national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to more than 14 percent in 2002. That figure is expected to reach 17 percent of GDP by the year 2011.⁶ Between 2002 and 2012, national health spending is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 7.3 percent, reaching \$3.1 trillion by 2012.⁷

Development opportunities exist in a number of health care sub-sectors. The Health Services sector (NAICS 621) is primed for surging growth both at the national and local levels as seniors become increasingly dependent on medical facilities. It is already a powerful economic sector with a total of 11.3 million U.S. jobs. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that employment in health care services will grow by 34.5 percent from 2002 to 2012, compared to 14.8 percent growth in jobs overall. Additionally, seven out of the 10 fastest-growing national occupations will be in health care-related fields. Health care services jobs also feature higher than average wages. While doctors and nurse specialists earn top salaries, the jobs available to individuals without substantial training can still provide viable, high-paying career opportunities in a relatively stable profession. Furthermore, numerous technical support occupations in health care services require only one or two years of higher education.

Hospitals (NAICS 622) accounted for the largest share of the 270,000 new jobs created in the health care industry in 2002, a number that led all other sectors. In fact, health care employment grew 2.6 percent at a time when most U.S. industries were shedding jobs. Employment in hospitals grew 2.7 percent in 2002, compared to a 1.6 percent average annual growth from 1996 to 2001.⁸

The Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (NAICS 623) sub-sector is also growing rapidly as the notion of “retirement homes” changes to reflect the more active, independent lifestyles of today’s seniors. Recruitment of retirees has become a viable economic development strategy in recent years as communities see the benefits of attracting older residents and their discretionary incomes to town. In fact, the state of Mississippi has determined that every retiree household recruited to the state represents the economic equivalent of 3.7 factory jobs.⁹

⁶ DeVol, Ross C. and Rob Koepp. “America’s Health Care Economy.” Milken Institute, August 2003, p. 2.

⁷ Source: Office of the Actuary Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

⁸ U.S. Labor Market in 2002: Continued Weakness, McMenamin, Krantz & Krolik, *Monthly Labor Review Online*, February 2003, vol. 126, no. 2. Article found at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2003/02/art1full.pdf

⁹ Goldblatt, Lawrence and Ruth Knack. “Recruiting Retirees.” *Planning*, March 2004, p. 30.

Interest in retiree-recruitment programs is based on pure demography – about half of the nation’s 76.4 million baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are or will soon be retiring and considering moving to warmer or friendlier communities. A report commissioned by Florida Governor Jeb Bush in 2002 found that baby boomers’ retirement patterns will differ from previous generations in that many retired boomers plan to continue working at least part-time, and will seek out localities that offer attractive employment opportunities.¹⁰ This fact raises the stakes in the competition to recruit retirees even higher, and dovetails this strategy with broader local job-creation targets.

The March 2004 issue of *Planning* magazine listed some of the most promising retiree-recruitment strategies being initiated nationwide. These strategies include:¹¹

1. Identify naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) and the services needed to keep them intact.
2. Foster collaboration between public health, recreation, public safety and education departments to create environments that are attractive to active adults.
3. Support efforts to enhance neighborhood and commercial area walkability by paying attention to urban design issues in these areas.
4. Address security concerns in plan review and design stages.
5. Keep abreast of senior trends in housing types and site amenities, and plan accordingly.
6. Provide civic and social gathering places geared to older adults.
7. Identify developer incentives, including lower mortgage rates for older adults; utilize local foundations to jump-start affordable development.
8. Work with health providers to respond to the needs of older adults.

Growth opportunities in the health care sector are not limited to service sub-sectors and care facilities, however. Manufacturers of medical instruments and supplies are also reaping the benefits of the dramatic growth in the U.S. health care industry. Smaller communities can stake a claim to these manufacturing niches by being proactive in their support of local operations and fully researching regional demand for these products. For example, based on the Milken Institute’s Health Pole¹² rankings, Lynchburg, Virginia is the top U.S. metropolitan area in the medical instruments and supplies category. The Commonwealth of Virginia also ranks 4th among U.S. states for employment growth in medical instruments and supplies from 1996 to 2001.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 32.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 32.

¹² An index depicting the health care industry concentration in a given geographic location, and its level of importance for that area compared to the nation as a whole. These location quotient-derived figures are essentially measures of spatial density and diversity of health care sectors in metro economies when placed in a national context. (Source: DeVol and Koepp, p. 4)

Current Assets

- ☑ Halifax Regional Hospital was the County's number four employer in the first quarter of 2003. Woodview Nursing Home is also one of Halifax County's top 15 employers.
- ☑ The Health Care and Social Assistance sector comprised 11.5 percent of local employment in 2002, behind only Manufacturing and Retail Trade.
- ☑ With a 2002 average annual wage of \$30,424, the Health Care and Social Assistance sector is well above Halifax County's overall average wage of \$25,638. Only two sectors featured higher pay for the year 2002.
- ☑ Halifax Regional Health System and its subsidiaries, Halifax Regional Hospital in South Boston, Halifax Regional Long Care Services (including the Woodview, a 180-bed nursing home); Halifax Regional Development Foundation; Halifax Regional Properties; and Southside Health Services are strong local assets. Four other nursing home facilities provide services in the community, as do over 100 physicians representing 28 specialties, and 14 dentists.
- ☑ Riverstone Technology Park is a progressive, state-of-the-art development with a focus on biotechnology and technical manufacturing, among other areas. The facility will be a potentially attractive lure for medical manufacturing firms and biotechnology-related enterprises.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Coordinate a regular Issues Roundtable for local health care and social assistance firms.
 - Formalize a meeting schedule for existing health care businesses in Halifax County to discuss needs and competitiveness issues.
 - Ensure that feedback is communicated to local economic development officials.
 - Source opportunities for cross-firm linkages, joint workforce efforts and other cluster synergies.
 - Monitor ongoing progress of cluster development efforts.
- ✓ Fully leverage the workforce development potential of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center for the health care sector.
 - Ensure that available programs are effectively marketed.
 - Work with affiliated two- and four-year colleges to expand vocational, certificate and degree options at SVHED.
 - Effectively link available training offerings with employers' staffing needs, and work to develop new programs if they are justified by local demand.

- ✓ Consider the development of a retiree-specific marketing plan.
 - Work with the existing cluster of local retirement communities and home care providers to develop effective best-practice marketing tools for new business recruitment and attraction of retirees to the area.
 - Partner with area cultural, tourism, health care and recreational organizations and businesses to effectively package Halifax County's existing retiree amenities, and develop additional resources.

- ✓ Actively recruit specific health care services companies to the area.
 - Focus on firms in existing sub-sector strengths and complementary industry categories.
 - Partner with current health care services companies in Halifax County to assist in recruitment efforts.

- ✓ Recruit firms in health care manufacturing sectors like medical instrument and supply, drug manufacturing, biotechnology, and others, to take advantage of Halifax County's manufacturing workforce.
 - Effectively market Riverstone Technology Park as a low-cost, high-quality location for these firms.
 - Investigate the creation of biotechnology-manufacturing-related programs at SVHED to enhance Halifax County's attractiveness to firms in this sector.

Tourism

Description

For many communities hard hit by the decline of certain manufacturing and agriculture sectors, the tourism industry has been a way to leverage local recreational and cultural assets to help stimulate job growth in an otherwise lagging economy. Tourists and the dollars they spend in a community can bolster area tax receipts, bring business to local stores and restaurants, and lead to the development of amenities that benefit existing residents' quality of life as well. In Halifax County, for example, the area has seen a 54.6 percent increase in lodging sales from 1996 to 2002 and collected over \$160,000 in lodging taxes in 2003.¹³ Making a locality attractive for tourists has the corresponding effect of augmenting the area's appeal for relocating businesses and workers. After all, every visitor to an area is also a potential resident, business owner or marketing tool advertising the community's strengths to friends, relatives and co-workers.

In the wake of the September 11th attacks, Americans are increasingly being drawn to tourist destinations closer to home. As a result, small town and "heritage" tourism are experiencing large upswings, with increased traffic reviving long-declining areas. A recent article in the magazine *Urban Land* noted, "Long-abandoned industrial sites, rural areas, and regions noted for their arts, crafts, music, customs, and other cultural idiosyncrasies are becoming the center of increasing interest on the part of tourists."¹⁴ With its compelling historical and cultural assets, Halifax County is an extremely viable destination for "heritage" tourists. Local resources include: Revolutionary War sites; a Civil War Battlefield and War Memorial; four sites on the regional Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail; and a proposed Heritage Park at the Paul C. Edmunds, Jr. Memorial Park under development in the County. Tourists who engage in educational travel are also more upscale – nearly 50 percent are college graduates, and almost 40 percent are employed in professional or managerial occupations.

While many tourism-related occupations are relatively low paying, they nevertheless offer vocational and employment choices for localities with lower educational attainment levels. By potentially drawing frustrated jobseekers back into the labor force, these positions increase local incomes, ease the burden on social service agencies and give formerly displaced workers a much-needed boost of confidence and self-esteem. These jobs also provide reliable summer work experience for local teenagers, hold the potential to support an area's immigrant and bilingual communities, and can often serve as entry points for future advancement in tourism-related companies.

Tourism is not defined by its own NAICS code, but is instead a compilation of several sectors including hotels and lodging, arts and recreation, and eating and drinking establishments.

¹³ Source: Halifax County Department of Tourism.

¹⁴ Miara, Jim. "The History Draw." *Urban Land*, August 2003, p. 69.

Current Assets

- ☑ Focus group participants and interviewees almost universally told *Market Street* that Halifax County’s breadth of local tourism-related resources is strong, and would position the region well for development of the tourism sector.
- ☑ Numerous local tourism destinations exist in the County, including: The Prizery, Virginia International Raceway, South Boston Speedway, Bob Cage’s Sculpture Farm, Staunton River State Park and Staunton River Battlefield State Park, the South Boston-Halifax County Museum of Fine Arts and History, the Cantaloupe Festival, the Halifax County Fair, Downtown South Boston, the historic town of Halifax, the Mountain Road Historic District and other historical sites across the county.
- ☑ Nearby lakes with over 1,100 miles of shoreline – as well as local streams – provide a variety of water-oriented recreational opportunities including: boating, fishing, sailing, swimming, and water skiing.
- ☑ The architecturally renowned Berry Hill mansion and estate is in the process of being transformed into a major resort destination, with ambitious plans to re-open the existing state-of-the-art 92-room hotel and add numerous amenities, including a golf course, retirement housing, “village-style” private residences in a town-like configuration, conference facilities, a spa, and additional hotel rooms.
- ☑ The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and Accommodation and Food Services sectors comprised 7.7 percent of local employment in 2002. The average annual wage for each sector in 2002 was \$13,628 and \$9,461, respectively – both well below the Commonwealth and national averages. It should be noted that seasonal and part-time employment factors into these sectors’ low average wage levels.

The following table includes data for Halifax County and comparison communities.

Travel Economic Impact Profile, 2001*: Halifax County, Virginia Benchmarks

<i>Impact</i>	<i>Halifax Co.</i>	<i>Mecklenburg Co.</i>	<i>Pittsylvania Co.</i>	<i>Danville city</i>	<i>Charlotte Co.</i>	<i>Charlottesville city</i>	<i>Williamsburg city</i>
Traveler Spending	\$27,667,710	\$77,188,310	\$29,525,109	\$51,197,386	\$8,872,237	\$137,660,413	\$376,997,457
<i>Change from Previous Year</i>	18.1 %	-4.6 %	-1.7 %	2.8 %	0.0 %	10.6 %	1.4 %
Travel Payroll ¹	\$5,789,551	\$13,817,322	\$4,496,937	\$12,664,975	\$1,861,128	\$52,894,451	\$107,137,545
Travel Employment	389	891	279	833	120	2,753	7,086
State Travel Taxes ²	\$1,568,506	\$4,250,314	\$1,672,796	\$3,004,768	\$498,529	\$7,520,256	\$19,454,416
Local Travel Taxes ²	\$701,088	\$6,593,820	\$2,215,799	\$1,133,607	\$368,318	\$4,191,475	\$11,760,784

*Preliminary data

¹Represents the direct wages, salaries, and tips corresponding to those employed directly as a result of travel.

²Represent estimates of direct travel-related state and local taxes generated within the locality.

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

From 2000 to 2001, Halifax County showed a notable 18.1 percent rise in traveler spending, but the County still trailed border areas like Mecklenburg and Pittsylvania Counties, the City of Danville, and more tourist-friendly cities like Charlottesville and Williamsburg, the latter by significant margins.

What these data show is that Halifax County has a potentially untapped economic resource in its many tourism-serving amenities. Local tax receipts are especially low for Halifax County relative to its regional benchmarks, perhaps an indication that local lodging taxes are well below the regional median.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Effectively leverage existing tourism assets.
 - Partner with Halifax County tourism-related businesses to organize regular Action Sessions to enable better communication between firms, discussion of common issues and needs, and development of action plans to stimulate sector growth.
 - Work with local tourist-serving facilities and destinations to develop multi-venue discount packages, cross-promotional materials, resource-referral networks, and point-of-purchase brochures to guide tourists to local destinations.
 - Engage in ongoing outreach to area hotels to provide guests with easily accessible information on local events, restaurants, venues, etc.
 - Fully advertise available regional amenities, including Virginia's Racing Region sites, and other Southside Virginia destinations.

- ✓ Aggressively source funds to augment tourism marketing for Halifax County.
 - Pursue monies through all available local, Commonwealth and national sources.
 - Leverage funds for large-scale, targeted marketing efforts to "heritage" tourists, motorsports enthusiasts, outdoors-people and recreational travelers, and other viable sub-markets.

- ✓ Continue development of tourism resources in Halifax County.
 - Augment local amenities through development of "rails-to-trails" networks, riverwalks, designated areas for birding and other niche pursuits, etc.
 - Actively support ongoing efforts to gain Virginia Main Street status for Downtown South Boston, and upgrade the historic town center of Halifax through its funded Downtown Revitalization Project.
 - Consider development of additional quality projects involving adaptive re-use of historic properties.

- ✓ Engage in continuous lobbying efforts to educate local elected and appointed leadership to the economic possibilities of the tourism sector.
 - Encourage local elected bodies to help advance tourism-related efforts through provision of funds and regulatory support.

Plastics Product Manufacturing

Description

Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing (NAICS 326) is a very diverse sector that includes packaging films and sheeting, pipe fittings, polystyrene foam, urethanes, and floor coverings. While Rubber Product Manufacturing (NAICS 3262) is a viable sub-sector, *Market Street* recommends that Halifax County target Plastics Product Manufacturing (NAICS 3261) as a future growth industry.

While many domestic manufacturing workers have seen their jobs shipped overseas in the past three years, the plastics industry has remained competitive using U.S. workers. *Business Facilities* magazine wrote, “If you think plastics products are mainly made overseas today thanks to cheaper labor, think again: the U.S. is the world’s largest producer of manufactured plastics products.”¹⁵

U.S. plastics companies increased employment by nearly 74 percent from 1982 to 2001, until a global recession caused slowdowns in many industries. According to *Business Facilities*, “The trend is still overwhelmingly positive in the long term for plastics manufacturers. What’s amazing is that this employment growth has been accompanied by steady gains in efficiency in each plastics facility.”¹⁶ A plastics trade group calculated that the plastics manufacturing industry grew 3.7 percent per year from 1980 to 2001, with employment, real shipments, and real value-added all growing faster than U.S. manufacturing as a whole over the period.

Because plastics manufacturing facilities tend to be manageable in size and less dependent on regional linkages (unlike auto plants), smaller communities are often in the running for the location of these enterprises. There are other benefits as well. A recent article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* noted: “Plastics manufacturing is appealing for several reasons. It’s considered clean, meaning no smokestacks and little wasted material. It’s not a big water consumer. It’s resilient in a down economy. And it pays... well.”¹⁷

20 Hottest Plastics Locations: 2003

1	Texas	11	Georgia
2	Ohio	11	New Jersey
3	Tennessee	13	Virginia
4	North Carolina	14	Mississippi
5	Alabama	14	Oklahoma
6	Mexico	16	Illinois
6	Pennsylvania	16	Missouri
8	South Carolina	18	Minnesota
9	Arizona	19	India
9	Louisiana	19	Kentucky

Source: *Business Facilities*, August 2003

While competition is great, communities like Halifax County with a good mix of local assets stand a strong chance of expanding a current sector through job growth and recruitment. And, as the table to the left shows, Virginia is one of the most competitive places in the world for plastics employment.

¹⁵ Khan, Karim. “Tomorrow’s Plastics Locations.” *Business Facilities*, August 2003, p. 24-25.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Duffy, Kevin. “Molding a future in plastics.” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 8/25/2003, p. E1-E4.

Business Facilities magazine based their rankings on a survey of consultants, real estate professionals, and location selection experts who were asked to name today's hottest opportunities in plastics. South Carolina, the 8th location on the list, recently announced the successful recruitment of plastics firm Sterilite Corporation to the small town of Clinton (population 8,129). Sterilite – the largest independent producer of plastic products for the home – will invest \$65 million in a new manufacturing and distribution center in Clinton. The facility is expected to one day employ 600 workers.¹⁸

Besides South Carolina, the entire Tennessee Valley¹⁹ is a region where the plastics industry continues to thrive, increasing 50 percent in the past 15 years. *Business Xpansion Journal* noted in their April 2004 edition: "Spurred by the automotive industry's presence in the Southeast, and the industry's just-in-time delivery requirements, the valley has become an attractive location for more than 500 domestic and international companies producing and processing plastics."²⁰

Current Assets

- ☑ Plastics product manufacturing went from comprising 17.2 percent of Halifax County's manufacturing sector in 2001, to accounting for 22.1 percent of all local manufacturing employment in 2002.
- ☑ Local plastics product manufacturing employment rose 8.5 percent from 2001 to 2002, the latest year data is available. The number of workers employed locally in the sub-sector increased from 685 to 743 over the period. Halifax County plastics manufacturers include: Presto Products Company, RTP Company, Lasco Bathware, Falcon Foam, and others.
- ☑ Plastics product manufacturing employees earned an annual average wage of \$29,947 in 2002, 16.8 percent higher than the County average wage of \$25,638.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Maximize the capacity of existing plastics product manufacturing firms.
 - Consider organizing regular industry roundtables to allow local executives to discuss common issues, challenges, and potential synergies within the sector.
 - Coordinate with existing company representatives to ensure that their expansion and workforce issues are effectively addressed.
 - Partner with SVHED and its affiliated colleges to link companies' workforce needs with potential new local training curricula.

¹⁸ Source: *Business Facilities*, accessed from http://www.facilitycity.com/busfac/bf_03_12_exclusive3.asp on 1/9/04.

¹⁹ Includes the states of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

²⁰ Duran, Rachel. "Plastics at the Crossroads." *Business Xpansion Journal*, April 2004, p. 19.

- ✓ Recruit specific plastics product manufacturing firms to Halifax County.
 - Work with officials from existing local companies to effectively convey to prospects Halifax County's advantages for plastics manufacturing firms.

- ✓ Leverage regional plastics research and training facilities.
 - Partner with the Advanced and Applied Polymer Processing Institute at Danville's Institute for Advanced Learning and Research to coordinate regional linkages and provide operational benefits for Halifax County plastics firms.

Transportation and Warehousing

Description

The Transportation and Warehousing sector (NAICS 48-49) includes industries providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage of goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities related to modes of transportation; the sector is also referred to as *distribution* or *logistics*. Technological advances are revolutionizing operational processes in the logistics sector, with computerization and wireless technology redefining the practice of goods distribution. Current technology allows businesses to track where individual vehicles are located via satellite, and use refrigerated units to provide computerized feedback on specific operational times and temperatures. Advanced in-house technology and hand-held wireless devices in the field also greatly streamline inventory-maintenance operations.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics' 2001 annual report, demand for transportation-related goods and services represented over 10 percent of the U.S. economy in the year 2000, supporting nearly one in eight U.S. jobs. Purchases of transportation-related goods and services comprised nearly 11 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2000, or \$1,054 billion. Only housing, health care, and food accounted for greater shares of GDP in 2000.²¹

A recent article in *Business Expansion Journal* explained that distribution and warehouse companies normally consider the following criteria when selecting expansion sites: geographic location; logistics; land; labor; economic incentives; and proximity to amenities and services. Because mammoth distributions centers require sites that can be served economically, firms are increasingly turning to rural areas to locate these facilities. An industry expert noted, "There is very little land available inside major metro areas... Companies are looking for places where land is available, industrial space is properly zoned, and where utilities and infrastructure are in place."²²

Incentives and linked workforce development programs are also effective lures for distribution and warehouse companies. For example, a truck driver-training program at Southside Virginia Community College helped supply workers to Dollar General Stores after the company located a 1.2-million-square-foot distribution center in South Boston in 1977.²³

²¹ Source: U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *2001 Annual Report on Transportation Statistics*, accessed from http://www.bts.gov/publications/transportation_statistics_annual_report/2001/html/chapter_07.html, on 1/6/04.

²² Duran, Rachel. "Searching for the Ideal Connection." *Business Expansion Journal*, V. 4, No. 7, August 2003, p. 19.

²³ Tomaselli, Kathleen Phalen and Robert Burke. "Life after NAFTA – Lake Country." *Virginia Business*, November 2003, p. 42.

Perhaps one of the most alluring features of transportation and warehouse employment is its geographic contingency; these jobs by their very nature will not be outsourced because they are fully dependent on location and regional distribution from a fixed hub. In communities like Southside Virginia that have seen thousands of local jobs replaced by overseas workers, stable, high-paying employment is a welcome change from the economic uncertainty of recent years.

Current Assets

- Transportation and warehousing employment comprised 6.9 percent of all local private-sector jobs in 2002.
- Halifax County's 897 transportation and warehousing jobs in 2002 represented an 8.6 percent increase over 2001 – a period when the local economy as a whole was shedding jobs.
- Transportation and warehousing employment in Halifax County pays an average of \$25,593 in annual wages, a figure exceeded by only a few local sectors.
- The County's transportation and warehousing employment had a 2001 location quotient of 1.7, a figure that speaks to the area's high concentration of employment in the sector, and its well-trained workforce in these occupations.
- Halifax County has over 1.2 million square feet of available building space, more than 3,500 acres of available sites, good transportation access to a number of regional metro areas, and comparatively low business and utility costs.
- The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center offers a Truck Driving Certification program through its regional community college affiliations.
- While Halifax County has capacity issues relative to its transportation infrastructure (particularly related to Highway 501), the level of existing employment and location of facilities for such firms as Dollar General indicates that this infrastructure does not render the community non-competitive for the transportation and warehousing sector.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Effectively leverage existing transportation and warehousing firms.
 - Consider formalizing regular meetings of top local industry officials to facilitate greater communication and cooperation among cluster companies.
 - Work with local company representatives to quickly and effectively address their expansion and workforce needs.
 - Leverage existing industry leaders to serve as ambassadors for visiting prospects and site-selectors.

- ✓ Actively recruit specific transportation and warehousing firms to the area.
 - Effectively market Halifax County's geographic, cost, workforce and transportation advantages to the corporate relocation community.

- ✓ Work to consistently upgrade local transportation and warehousing infrastructure.
 - Continue to lobby aggressively for transportation improvements to local highways, especially the US 501 Regional Coalition's efforts to upgrade Highway 501 both north and south.
 - Ensure that Halifax County's wire-line, broadband and wireless communications infrastructure is competitive with benchmark communities.
 - Work to run utilities to all non-served sites and buildings.

- ✓ Partner with SVHED and affiliated colleges to design logistics-based curricula for local students, and existing and potential transportation and warehousing firms.
 - Fully leverage existing resources at Danville Community College and Southside Virginia Community College.

Motorsports

Description

As NASCAR grows more popular year by year (it is America's fastest growing spectator sport), and interest in motorsports spreads from its Southern strongholds to the entire United States, opportunities to take advantage of this growth abound in communities with an existing base of motorsports operations and amenities.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is a hotbed of motorsports activity, with 37 different racing venues, 10 major NASCAR events annually, one IRL Indy-car event, NASCAR Dodge events, and numerous IHRA, USAR, AMA, and ARCA-sanctioned races, among others. Supportive Commonwealth-level organizations like the Virginia Motorsports Coalition provide information and guidance to local motorsports companies and venues, while Virginia Governor Mark Warner has made motorsports one of the key planks of his economic development platform.

Warner's Virginia Motorsports Initiative is a plan to entice prospective motorsport businesses to Virginia by offering them government-funded workforce programs and low-interest loans. An important part of Warner's plan is to better market Virginia's 37 small racetracks to draw tourists, machine shops and racing-controls and instrument makers. Since launching the initiative, Warner said that dozens of research and design facilities have already begun testing their products at Virginia International Raceway in Halifax County.²⁴

The Virginia Motorsports Initiative has three main components:²⁵

1. Recruit companies to Virginia involved in the motorsports business that will provide well-paid year-round employment.
2. Support Virginia's 37 different racing venues—from the Winston Cup circuit to local dirt tracks and drag strips.
3. Nurture research and development and workforce training in Virginia's motorsports industry.

Another effort, "Virginia's Racing Region," is a multi-jurisdictional strategy between Southside Virginia entities including Chambers of Commerce in Danville, Martinsville, South Boston, and the counties of Halifax, Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania, is an attempt to leverage the region's racing heritage to ensure a better future for the area through motorsports-related tourism and development.

The key to Halifax County's ability to maximize the impact of the motorsports sector will be its capacity to effectively develop local research and educational resources. By

²⁴ Monks, Matthew. "Governor sees initiative as help for region's woes." *Martinsville Bulletin*, October 20, 2003, p. 1.

²⁵ Source: The Office of Governor Mark Warner.

successfully linking area facilities like VIR and South Boston Speedway with research-and-development and/or workforce training programs either on-site or elsewhere in the County (for example, SVHED, or local schools), Halifax County will have a breadth of assets that a relocating or expanding motorsports company would find very compelling.

Current Assets

- ☑ Virginia International Raceway (VIR) is the premier road course in Virginia and, at a length of 4.2 miles, is America's longest road racing circuit. In addition to the racetrack, VIR also features:
 - VIR Club: America's first motorsports-oriented country club, offering priority use of the track, family and recreational amenities, and social/business facilities.
 - VIR Raceplex Industrial Park: The Park offers tenants access to all VIR's track facilities; a planned Phase I development complete with build-to-suit and purchase facility options; and access to the Virginia Institute for Performance Engineering and Research (VIPER), a partnership between VIR and Virginia Tech to create an advanced vehicle dynamics lab.
 - VIR Euro Rally School and Corporate Motorsports Experience: Housed in a 7,200-square-foot facility, VIR Euro Rally incorporates administrative offices, three conference rooms/classrooms, showers and a maintenance/fabrication shop. Its training grounds cover over 320 acres and include miles of specially designed stages, tracks, and trails.

- ☑ Big Daddy's South Boston Speedway is a NASCAR-sanctioned 0.4-mile oval short track in operation for nearly 50 years. With a reputation as one of the world's fastest short tracks, the facility has been the training ground for a number of current NASCAR drivers. Having recently undergone renovations, the Speedway's 2004 schedule includes six special events and 14 NASCAR Dodge weekly events.

- ☑ Resources at regional and nearby colleges and universities include:
 - University of Virginia School of Engineering and Applied Science's motorsports engineering program;
 - Advanced Vehicle Dynamics Lab at Virginia Tech;
 - Old Dominion University's Langley Full-Scale Wind Tunnel; and
 - Danville Community College, Southside Virginia Community College and Patrick Henry Community College all offer degrees and classes in motorsports-related fields.

- ☑ Another regional asset is the recently announced arrival of NASCAR Craftsman Truck team HT Motorsports in Henry County. The team will be located at the to-be-constructed Virginia Motorsports Technology Center at the Patriot Centre Business Park in Henry County. The \$1.2 million, 50,000-square-foot facility will also house Patrick Henry Community College's advanced motorsports curriculum, scheduled to be offered in January 2005.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Continue efforts to market Halifax County's motorsports resources to the tourism industry and motorsports-related companies.
- ✓ Maintain current levels of communication and cooperation with elected officials at all levels to expand and enhance testing and training programs at VIR.
 - Work closely with Governor Warner's office to effectively leverage all components of the Virginia Motorsports Initiative.
- ✓ Persist in the active recruitment of motorsports teams and companies to Halifax County.
 - Work with regional partners to effectively package Southside motorsports resources in these recruitment efforts.
- ✓ Develop research and educational programs in Halifax County supportive of the motorsports industry.
 - Pursue development of specific, targeted research-and-development and/or educational programs either on-site at area tracks, or in affiliation with SVHED and local schools.
 - Partner with regional counties to continue efforts to develop a Motorsports High School at VIR, or elsewhere in the area.

GOAL 1: A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Objective 2: Create and implement a consensus-based, best management practice Agricultural Sustainability Program

At one time, Halifax County was the number two bright-leaf-tobacco-producing county in the United States. While this ranking has been atrophied by foreign competition, decreases in the number of Americans smoking and other factors, agriculture remains a crucial component of the Halifax County economy. Year 2000 data show that farm employment still comprises 7.6 percent of the local workforce, a high number relative to other Southside counties. In 2001, Halifax County's location quotient for farm employment was 4.2, the highest in the local economy and a reflection of much higher concentrations of local farm employment compared to the U.S.

There has been controversy that Halifax County's farm employment percentages still do not indicate the total agricultural employment in the area. Because "covered" agriculture employment (those employees covered by unemployment insurance laws) reflects only the largest agricultural firms, smaller companies and day laborers are not included in these totals, according to a Virginia economic development official. Regardless of how employment is measured, however, feedback *Market Street* received from the agricultural and non-ag communities confirmed that the sector is viewed as an important contributor to the past – and future – of the Halifax County economy.

Farmers all across America are struggling to remain profitable in the face of competition from foreign growers and multinational farm conglomerates; Halifax County is no exception. Local agricultural business owners are attempting to diversify their farms through beef production and non-traditional local crops. Assisting local farmers are representatives from the Halifax County Agricultural Development Office, the Halifax Agricultural Marketing Center, and other regional offices created to support the County's agricultural sector.

Increasingly, the focus of these officials is on a business practice known as "*value-added agriculture*." According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Business Cooperative Service, value-added products are defined by:²⁶

- A change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam);
- The production of a product in a manner that enhances its value, as demonstrated through a business plan (such as organically produced products); or

²⁶ Agricultural Marketing Research Center. *Business Development - Value-Added Agriculture*. 07 May 2004. <<http://www.agmrc.org/business/valueaddedag.html>>.

- The physical segregation of an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product.

According to the publication *Farm Management Update*, predicted trends in agriculture that support the development of value added activities are:²⁷

- To stay competitive, U.S. farming must move towards a more industrial model in order to cooperatively produce products with improved, consumer driven attributes.
- Food supply chains will rely on vertical integration and coordination techniques of production, marketing, and/or processing to optimally deliver products with attributes that meet specific end-user needs.
- Food safety and quality control will become a driving force in the food sector. Consumers will become more sensitive to where their food comes from and how it was produced.
- Consumers will become more involved with environmental, social, and cultural issues related to agriculture.

Making a profit in value-added agriculture can be a challenge. Because getting a new product into the highly competitive retail market is difficult, success requires sound marketing savvy. The USDA estimates that at least two out of every three new food products fail due to lack of customer appeal. Neglecting to do market research and the lack of a sound business plan are leading causes of failure. Even if a product is successful, farmers should expect to wait about three to four years before realizing any profits.²⁸

Another potential new cash crop for Halifax County farmers involves the practice of “*biopharming*” – the growing of pharmaceuticals in fields. A new farm partnership called the Iowa Cooperative in the north-central portion of the state is working to develop a cluster of 300 to 500 producers that could provide a critical mass of production for the fast-growing pharmaceutical industry. The producers would ideally become part of a value chain, and also provide new high-skill jobs for the region. Examples of specific pharmaceutical crops include: lutein (harvested from marigolds), which prevents eye disease, and Fortium R (harvested from rosemary), an antioxidant that maintains the freshness of foods.²⁹

Yet another potential strategy to sustain Halifax County’s farm community is *agri-tourism*. Agri-tourism is defined as, “A commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch, or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner.” A subset of agri-tourism is “farm/ranch recreation,” which refers

²⁷ Ellerman, John. “Value Added Opportunities for Agriculture — Wave Into the Future.” *Farm Management Update*, Spring 2003, p. 1.

²⁸ Michigan State University Extension. *Frequently Asked Questions about Value-Added*. 07 May 2004. <<http://www.msue.msu.edu/valueadded/faq%27s.htm>>.

²⁹ Drabentstott, Mark and Katharine H. Sheaff. “The New Power of Regions: A Policy Focus for Rural America – A Conference Summary.” Center for the Study of Rural America, May 2002, p. 7.

to activities such as fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc., conducted on private agricultural lands.³⁰

Farmers and agricultural support organizations are increasingly using the Internet to maximize the impact and profitability of their agri-tourism operations. One example: A “U-pick” apple and peach orchard in Illinois had more than 500,000 hits on its Web site in less than four years. A representative from the orchard said, “We’ve found that, at least for what I would call the agritourism business, the Web site is a necessity.”³¹ Promoters of the concept add that Web sites give consumers an alternative to supermarket products, and allow them to learn where and how their food was grown.

National agricultural groups are also trying to increase awareness of Web-based strategies. For example, the National Farmers Union is using a USDA grant to teach farmers to market their goods over the Internet. Begun last year, the group’s Web site – e-cooperatives.com – got 150,00 hits from producers and others in its first year alone.³²

Regardless of the strategy – or strategies – selected to revitalize Halifax County’s agricultural economy, the sustainable practice of farming in the community is a vital component of how the area defines itself now and in the future, and must be maintained at all costs.

ACTION STEPS³³

- ✓ Maximize utilization of existing markets for traditional Halifax County agricultural products like tobacco, beef cattle, and others.
 - Coordinate the appropriate dissemination of all relevant product and industry information to local agricultural producers.

- ✓ Examine the feasibility of production and marketing of alternative agricultural commodities and “value-added” products.
 - Partner with the Halifax Agricultural Marketing Center to determine new product feasibility and best-practice marketing efforts.
 - Consider collective marketing efforts linking a number of County producers.

³⁰ Small Farm Center, University of California at Davis. *What is Agri -Tourism?* 12 May 2004. <<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets/what.html>>.

³¹ Groppe, Maureen. “Farmers strike pay dirt with Web.” *USA Today*, May 19, 2004, p. 18A.

³² Ibid.

³³ Many of the programmatic elements of the Halifax County Agricultural Development Office’s plan of work are integrated into these Action Steps so that Halifax County’s economic development programs are consistent across-the-board.

- ✓ Pursue the potential development of agri-tourism-related endeavors, including fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, greenhouse products, etc.
 - Work closely with Halifax County's tourism office to integrate agri-tourism strategies into the County's overall tourism programs.
 - Develop Web sites in partnership with local farmers to leverage the Internet to more effectively market agri-tourism programs.

- ✓ Consider the development of a local Agricultural Entrepreneurship Program.
 - Coordinate efforts with SVHED, regional community colleges, the Halifax County Agricultural Development Office, the Halifax Agricultural Marketing Center, the Longwood Small Business Development Office, and other supportive agencies and institutions.

- ✓ Work to effectively link Halifax County industrial and agricultural development authorities and officials in dynamic new partnerships, cooperative endeavors, and holistic local improvement strategies.

GOAL 1: A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Objective 3: Ensure that local businesses have the resources needed to expand

Some of a community's greatest assets are the businesses currently operating in the area. These are firms already established in the community, employing local residents and generating sales, income and tax base. Effectively managing and acting on the expansion and workforce needs of these companies is a prime concern of local developers.

One proven method to address the needs of current local companies is an effective business calling program. The program ensures that the issues of existing businesses are communicated and heard, and that local economic development representatives take proactive steps to help these companies expand their operations. The structure, design and functional elements of a business calling program are, to a certain extent, dependent on the staffing capacity of local economic development organizations, the needs of local businesses, and the size and number of economic clusters present in a location.

At the very least, Halifax County's business calling program should be formalized so that both economic development staff and local businesses have a level of programmatic consistency that ensures operations are transferable from business to business and do not suffer if staff turns over in the coordinating agency. Components of many successful business-calling programs include:

- A survey "instrument" to collect both basic and specific company information;
- A call-sequencing schedule designed to service local businesses based on need and importance;
- A local business and industry information database maintained with the most current contact and operational information; and
- A formalized process for setting up interviews with new or relocated businesses.

Another effective tool to support existing businesses is the development of a one-stop center for local business assistance. Examples of these include:

- The city of **Bellingham, Washington**, partnering with its Chamber of Commerce, formed the Bellingham Business Service Center, a one-stop business center co-located with the Chamber in the downtown business core. The Center is staffed with a director and a business development specialist, and offers business assistance and resources including financial information, site location support, business permits/regulations/licenses information, a business resource library, business consultation, meeting room access, short-term office space, computer access, local phone access, business plan assistance, workforce database, and loan packaging.

- **Boise, Idaho** opened a one-stop-shop permit center that includes staff members from various departments and agencies in one physical location, making it possible for applicants to obtain information, application materials and pay fees for necessary permit and development approvals in one consolidated location. The city also instituted an expedited “Fast Track” permit review process that utilizes a predevelopment review procedure to identify incoming permits and direct them along a path of least resistance towards an efficient and timely issuance. Lastly, the city’s computerized permit plan tracking system has also helped to expedite the permitting process by making current project and permit information available electronically.

By helping to facilitate growth and expansion of existing businesses, Halifax County developers will ensure that the companies already contributing to the local economy get the attention and resources needed to expand their operations and add to the community’s economic base.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Develop a comprehensive Business Calling Program that effectively leverages existing companies of all sizes and sectors for local growth.
 - Staff the program with knowledgeable professionals and/or fully trained volunteers.
 - Structure visits/interviews to collect as much varied and industry-specific information as possible, and input results into a constantly updated database.
 - Advertise this data to the site-selection community to provide a broader perspective on local capacity.
- ✓ Effectively source all available local, Commonwealth and federal monies to fund area programs and provide expansion and relocation incentives.
- ✓ Consider the development of a one-stop business assistance center in Halifax County.
 - Partner with local governments and officials to integrate as many services, regulatory components and assistance staff as possible.
- ✓ Enhance regional marketing and support services.
 - Fully leverage programs, assistance, and reach of the Southside Planning District Commission and the Lake Country Marketing Council.
 - Build more expansive partnerships with Chambers of Commerce and economic development departments/officials in Virginia’s Racing Region counties and other Southside communities.

GOAL 1: A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Objective 4: Promote entrepreneurial development and small business expansion

As continental and global free trade pacts solidify and expand in the coming years, low-cost, low-wage countries will only increase their stranglehold on commodity manufacturing. Current and future entrepreneurship and small business development programs serve as insurance policies for Halifax County economic developers in today's current climate of industrial change. Programs like these enable aspiring businesspeople with ideas to get their businesses off the ground and may potentially lead to significant local job growth.

One example of traditional economic sectors being transformed by entrepreneurs is textile manufacturing. Textile employment has been an important component of Halifax County's economy and communities like it in the rural South. But with low-cost overseas competition reducing prospects for American apparel and textile manufacturers in commodity production, domestic firms are increasingly turning to innovation and niche manufacturing to survive. According to Roland Stephen, a faculty fellow with the Institute for Emerging Issues at North Carolina State University:

There is no hope in commodity production because we'll never be the low-cost producer. The way out is to innovate, to reinvent the processes, to keep coming up with new fibers... We are heading to the point where there will be a place for entrepreneurial, specialized firms in the U.S., and the place for mass market production is overseas.³⁴

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Center for the Study of Rural America echoes these sentiments. Researchers at the center have said that the continuing slump in rural manufacturing raises fundamental questions about the viability of industrial recruitment, for years the lynchpin of most rural economic development strategies. The Center's vice president and director, Mark Drabenstott, argues that, "New directions are needed. Initiatives to help Main Streets grow more entrepreneurs will be a cornerstone of new rural policy."³⁵ For Halifax County, these "initiatives" may take many forms, but what is crucial is that local officials balance industrial recruitment and business expansion programs with efforts to nurture and grow entrepreneur-driven enterprises and the area's fledgling small businesses.

According to the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, research conducted in over 1,000 successful rural communities found high-growth entrepreneurs located in nearly every one. These companies have adapted their business models to be successful in rural

³⁴ Bond, Patti. "Still made in the U.S.A." *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, 9/21/03, p. D1.

³⁵ Hoover, Kent. "Rural America's future depends on entrepreneurs." *New Mexico Business Weekly*, 9/15/03, accessed from www.msnbc.com on 9/13/03.

locations. According to the Center's co-director, "In almost all cases, these entrepreneurs remained in rural areas as a matter of choice."³⁶

Research bears out these strategies. Including the self-employed, small businesses account for 58 percent of the private, nonfarm U.S. work force, constitute 43 percent of all domestic sales, and generate 51 percent of the nation's private Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Small businesses also contributed the largest share of the millions of new jobs created during the late 1990s.³⁷

The Longwood University Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) at SVHED is the main resource for entrepreneurs and small businesspeople in its service area of Halifax, Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties. The Center has one on-site employee who uses the office's resources, along with those at Longwood University's Farmville office, to assist entrepreneurs with acquiring licenses, developing business plans, securing Small Business Association (SBA) loans, and connecting with local financial institutions.

The office also coordinates three to four local seminars a year on such topics as tax tips, marketing, starting a small business, and others. In 2003, the office assisted 55 clients, leading to eight new business start-ups and nearly \$2.0 million in seed money raised, mostly from local banks. With money tight at the local and Commonwealth levels, LSBDC office does not have a large budget for marketing, and only received roughly \$35,000 in 2003 from Halifax, Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties for local operations.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Maximize local awareness and impact of the Longwood Small Business Development Center at SVHED.
 - Work with local and regional officials to raise awareness of the Center's services.
 - Ensure that all Halifax County constituencies are familiar with the Center and its assistance programs.
 - Partner with local governments and, potentially, the private sector, to secure additional operating funds for the Center.

- ✓ Consider the formation of a local SCORE chapter in Halifax County.³⁸
 - Leverage area executives for training and mentoring roles.

³⁶ Duran, Rachel. "Supporting Entrepreneurial Visions." *Business Xpansion Journal*, April 2004, p. 26.

³⁷ Source: U.S. Small Business Administration.

³⁸ The SCORE Association is a national nonprofit organization with a public service mission. SCORE's 10,500 volunteers provide small business counseling and training through a network of 389 chapters and 800 branches. SCORE, a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration, currently serves nearly 400,000 entrepreneurs annually.

- ✓ Develop sustainable funding sources for Halifax County entrepreneurs and small businesses.
 - Consider the creation of local seed capital funds, revolving loan funds through local banks, microenterprise grants, and other non-traditional sources of capital.
 - Pursue all available Commonwealth and federal small-business development funds.

- ✓ Support ongoing entrepreneurship and career awareness programs through Halifax County public schools, and seek to expand programs if possible.
 - Enhance public and private support of 6th-grade career fairs, middle-school career awareness training, and the Junior Leadership program at Halifax County High School.

- ✓ Leverage the expertise of existing Halifax County entrepreneurs.
 - Convene entrepreneurship networking groups where existing local small businesspeople can meet with aspiring entrepreneurs to provide guidance on best-practice enterprise-development strategies.

GOAL 1: A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Objective 5: Enhance partnerships for economic development

American communities large and small are realizing that the most effective way to compete in today's economy is through the proactive, progressive and cooperative interaction of local public and private sectors. Partnerships between public and private entities are energizing local economies by enhancing revenue available for economic development, easing the implementation of policies and programs, creating innovative employment and training programs, and building a spirit of community development and renewal.

In Halifax County, dynamic public-private efforts have succeeded in redeveloping two obsolete tobacco warehouses into the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center and The Prizery. The capacity and goodwill demonstrated by these successful efforts are evidence that the public and private sectors in Halifax County have the potential to unite for the greater good of the community.

Recent discussions regarding the creation of a joint marketing authority for South Boston and Halifax County represent encouraging signs that partnerships for economic development are moving forward. On May 17, 2004, Halifax County and South Boston agreed to move toward the establishment of a joint Economic Development Authority focusing on marketing, existing business support and project management. The new Authority's board would be comprised of five at-large members from the County, and two at-large members from South Boston.³⁹

Halifax County officials should also strive to maximize the presence and programs of their affiliated regional planning organizations. The Southside Planning District Commission and the Lake Country Marketing Council are both tremendous resources for Halifax County economic developers to leverage for local growth. The regional organizations have access to additional funding streams for key projects, and have a wealth of experience forging cross-county partnerships and developing new sites.

For example, these regional organizations helped facilitate a relationship between the Brunswick and Mecklenburg Industrial Development Authorities that led to the joint development of a "virtual" building at the Roanoke River Regional Industrial Park. The "virtual" building program is a new endeavor by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to greatly reduce the cost of providing a saleable property for relocation and expansion prospects.

A "virtual" building is a business location where all the preliminary work has been completed in order to start construction immediately on a building after a company agrees to locate at a site. The building has been designed, all utilities are connected to the

³⁹ "County, South Boston Mull Formation of Marketing Body." *The Gazette Virginian*, May 19, 2004, p. 1.

site, the development team is in place, cost estimates and a construction schedule have been established, and the site plan permit has been obtained.

According to Sherry Ramsey of the Brunswick County IDA, “This is a tremendous marketing tool that gives Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties a competitive advantage in recruiting new companies to the Business Park. The cost is very minimal in comparison to constructing a building that may sit vacant for a number of years waiting on the right company.”⁴⁰

Halifax County should consider the VEDP’s “virtual” building program for each phase of development at Riverstone Technology Park.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Work to form a 501(c)3 corporation for economic development fundraising purposes.
 - Fully engage local businesses for the enhancement of Halifax County’s economic development capacity.

- ✓ Continue efforts to consolidate marketing efforts of town and County Industrial Development Authorities (IDAs) into a joint Economic Development Authority.
 - Provide prospects and site-selection professionals with a single point-of-contact for relocation inquiries.
 - Consider participation in VEDP’s “virtual” building program for future developments at Riverstone Technology Park.

- ✓ Fully leverage all regional partnerships for economic development.
 - Work with the Southside Planning District Commission and Lake Country Marketing Council in South Hill to explore all potential cooperative developments, cross-county partnerships, and shared funding arrangements for quality projects.

- ✓ Develop linkages between public and private organizations and officials to ensure that formalized mechanisms for communication are in place, and effective.
 - Consider potential methods of engagement such as annual “State of the County” events, and trust-building workshops.

⁴⁰ Lake Country Region. *Brunswick and Mecklenburg IDA’s Develop “Virtual” Building*. 25 May 2004. <http://www.lakecountryva.com/news_articles_8_28_03.asp>.

GOAL 1: BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Reduction of annual unemployment rate to 6.0% by 2009.
- ✓ Increase of labor force participation rate to 75.0% by 2009.
- ✓ Achievement of an annual total employment growth rate of 2.5% by 2009.
- ✓ Increase of median real per capita income to \$22,250 by 2009.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of residents' income from net earnings to 70.0% by 2010.
- ✓ Diversification of local economy such that no sector contains over 20% of Martinsville-Henry County's total employment by 2009.
- ✓ Increase of growth in Halifax County farm employment to 2.0% per year by 2009.
- ✓ Increase of median per capita income of local nonfarm proprietors to \$15,500 by 2010.
- ✓ Successful location of two biotechnology-related firms at Riverstone Technology Park by 2008.
- ✓ Successfully achievement of Virginia Main Street designation for Downtown South Boston.
- ✓ Development of a "rails-to-trails" network in Halifax County.
- ✓ Development of a Heritage Park in Halifax County.
- ✓ Development of a motorsports high school at VIR.
- ✓ Creation of active industry groups in all targeted sectors by 2006.
- ✓ Creation of an Agricultural Entrepreneurship Program.
- ✓ Creation of a local Business Calling Program.
- ✓ Development of a one-stop business assistance center.
- ✓ Creation of a SCORE chapter in Halifax County.
- ✓ Development of an entrepreneurial networking group.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of minority-owned local businesses by 15% by 2009.
- ✓ Creation of a 501(c)3 economic development corporation in Halifax County.
- ✓ Development of a "virtual" building at Riverstone Technology Park.
- ✓ Successful creation of a unified Economic Development Authority for Halifax County and South Boston.

GOAL 1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Monthly and annual unemployment rate as compared to Virginia and the U.S.
- Net job growth and average wage of new jobs.
- Number of net new businesses created in Halifax County, and average number of employees.
- Amount of financial assistance obtained from private, Commonwealth and federal sources.
- Number of expansions by existing businesses annually, and net number of new jobs created.
- Number of business relocations and expansions in each Target Business Cluster and overall.
- Number of jobs and capital investment generated in each Target Business Cluster and overall.
- Average annual wage and real per capita income of net new jobs created in each Target Business Cluster.
- Percent of total Halifax County employment held by each local economic sector.
- Vacancy rate of Halifax County commercial and industrial properties.
- Direct infrastructure spending related to site development.
- Dollar value of new capital investment onsite.
- Number of new economic development programs created.
- Net number of new businesses and jobs resulting from economic development programs.
- Number of retirees residing in Halifax County, and net local impact of retirement communities in Halifax County.
- Number of new, health care-related programs developed at SVHED.
- Various tourism measures, including net annual new visitors, visitor spending, Commonwealth and local tax contributions, spending on tourism resources, attendance at local races, destinations and parks, and public money invested in tourism infrastructure.
- Percentage of Halifax County plastics firms effectively leveraging the Advanced and Applied Polymer Processing Institute at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville.
- Number of meetings held on Highway 501 improvements, and total dollars spent lobbying for infrastructure upgrades.

- Number of logistics-based classes developed at SVHED.
- Enrollment numbers and amount of funding invested at VIR motorsports high school.
- Number of motorsports teams recruited to Halifax County.
- Amount of Virginia funding dedicated to JOUSTER and VIPER programs at VIR.
- Annual yield and net income from “value-added” products.
- Number of agri-tourism destinations, visitation rates, and total visitor spending.
- Number of companies successfully developed from the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Program.
- Number of joint meetings between industrial and agricultural development officials.
- Number of firms assisted, percentage of businesses retained and total jobs resulting from assisted businesses in Business Calling Program.
- Total number of assistance requests at one-stop assistance center, and percentage of permits successfully obtained.
- Net annual increase in number of businesses and individuals utilizing the services of the Longwood Small Business Development Center.
- Number of businesses and jobs created by businesses assisted by the Longwood Small Business Development Center, average annual wage of jobs created, and total tax impact of assisted businesses.
- Net annual and total available seed funding for entrepreneurs in Halifax County.
- Number and percentage of participation in entrepreneurship and career awareness programs at Halifax County public schools.
- Number of individuals participating in entrepreneurial networking group.
- Net number of new minority-owned businesses, average annual sales per firm, and number of new jobs created.
- Total dollars invested in Halifax County 501(c)3 corporation.
- Number of location inquiries, assisted businesses, and successful company recruitments at Economic Development Authority.
- Number of joint meetings between public and private officials in Halifax County.
- Total funding of regional development projects facilitated by the Southside Planning District Commission and Lake Country Marketing Council.
- Number of regional programs and partnerships developed through the Southside Planning District Commission and Lake Country Marketing Council.



H a l i f a x
C o u n t y

**Goal 2: Education &
Workforce Development**

GOAL 2: EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Objective 1: Develop a comprehensive community-wide plan for local educational improvement

The quality of a community's local workforce is the most important issue in economic development today. If an area cannot produce the skilled, high-performing workers companies seek, these firms will expand or relocate elsewhere. And no factor is more critical to workforce development than the quality of graduates coming from the community's public school system.

To a certain extent, statistical data and qualitative feedback paint somewhat conflicting pictures of public school quality in Halifax County. Quantitative analysis showed that the County's educational attainment is improving, its dropout rate is falling dramatically, and the overwhelming majority (12 out of 14) of local schools are Fully Accredited under Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) criteria for the 2003-04 academic year.⁴¹

However, numerous respondents in focus groups and interviews told *Market Street* that Halifax County's public schools are increasingly failing to meet the challenge of a changing school-age demographic and a historical legacy among certain families that deemphasizes educational benefits. Local budgetary constraints have also led to school consolidations and prevent County officials from arresting the system's declining physical infrastructure. While some respondents said they were happy with the quality of their children's education, many others expressed dismay at what they felt was declining school quality and told stories of friends and relations leaving the community because the local schools were inadequate. Tellingly, nearly every focus group listed education at or near the top of priority local concerns.

A vast number of local residents also feel that SOL results do not effectively indicate pervasive school quality. In fact, many respondents said that SOLs actually impede learning because teachers are forced to focus on test preparation, and do not have the freedom to make their curricula interesting or engaging. Nearly every student participating in a focus group told *Market Street* that they felt SOLs were detracting from their classroom and school experiences. Numerous teachers expressed a similar sentiment.

While some of these issues will only be resolved at the Commonwealth level, Halifax County leaders can nevertheless address many other concerns that are constraining local school quality. Perhaps the most crucial issue is a lack of available funding for school improvements. Historically low tax rates in Halifax County – and vocal local opposition from certain quarters to raising these rates – were cited by many respondents as the critical constraints to a comprehensive local educational improvement program.

⁴¹ Halifax County Schools. *Accreditation Reports*, 2003-04. 10 May 2004.
<http://www.halifax.k12.va.us/Accredit.htm>.

The finance committee of the Halifax County Board of Supervisors recently proposed increasing real estate taxes by 4 cents, and personal property taxes by 24 cents. If approved, the increases will generate an estimated \$1,108,784 in additional County income, according to budget officials.⁴² Numerous respondents told *Market Street* that increased tax revenues represent a necessary component of any Halifax County educational improvement program.

A recent report from the Board of Supervisors-appointed Halifax County Advisory Committee On Educational Improvement issued on February 9, 2004, also found that school financing, infrastructure, enrollment sizes and student development in the County were sub-optimal.

The Committee's overall recommendations were:⁴³

1. To consider the establishment of an Arts and Technology Magnet Governor's School at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center in South Boston for eleventh and twelfth grade students.
2. To consider the establishment of an Applied Technology and Career Exploration School for all eighth grade school students.
3. To consider the adoption of a Career Pathway Course of Instruction for all standard diploma students.
- 4-7. (Addressed specific school construction and consolidations.)
8. In the interim, and while these considerations are underway, prioritize the need for immediate corrections and repairs in the elementary schools that directly relate to safety and health issues and then those issues that directly impact all instruction and learning.

To reassert the quality of Halifax County's schools, county school administrators, elected officials, citizen leaders, parents and children alike must take responsibility for improving local educational performance and prioritizing school financing in County elections, public discourse and local programming decisions. The private sector in Halifax County must also be integrated into critical school-improvement efforts. Developing vital linkages between business and industry and the County's educational institutions is essential to fostering the type of participatory climate, student empowerment, and value-of-education programs necessary to motivate area children to want to learn.

⁴² "County Real Estate, Personal Property Tax Hike Proposed." *The Gazette Virginian*, May 19, 2004, p. 1.

⁴³ Halifax County Advisory Committee On Educational Improvement. *Report*. Issued February 9, 2004 to the Halifax County Board of Supervisors and Halifax County School Board, p. 13-14.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Evaluate ways to increase available funds for Halifax County educational improvements, including potentially raising local real estate taxes.
 - Pursue all available Commonwealth and federal monies, including tobacco commission grants.
 - Study the feasibility of increasing local taxes to fund educational improvements.
 - Consider partnering with private developers for school construction under Virginia's 2002 Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEFIA).⁴⁴

- ✓ Develop teacher-retention strategies and quality-control programs for educator performance.
 - Work to provide competitive local salaries relative to regional systems.
 - Involve teachers in curricula and programming decisions, and affect a classroom environment that is conducive to top-rate teacher performance and satisfaction.
 - Augment SOLs with qualitative performance-based criteria, including student-parent surveys and other innovative monitoring tools.

- ✓ Develop progressive curricula for County schools based on best-practice Commonwealth and national models.
 - Pursue strategies detailed in the Halifax County Advisory Committee On Educational Improvement report.
 - Focus on attention to child-specific needs, integration of technology into lesson plans and optimal administrator/staff communication.
 - Incorporate The Prizery and SVHED into class-development strategies.

- ✓ Design and implement effective school-to-work, vocational-technical training, and youth small business and entrepreneurship programs.
 - Pursue a Career Pathway Course of Instruction as detailed by the Halifax County Advisory Committee On Educational Improvement report.
 - Continue and enhance Halifax County's successful Mentor Program.
 - Partner with local businesses in the development of internship and small business development programs for youth.
 - Consider development of a program pairing volunteer farmers with local "at-risk" youth to provide weekend or short-term farm education and labor immersion training.

⁴⁴ Under the Act, qualified public educational facilities may be financed using tax-exempt private activity bonds. A "qualified" school is a facility that is part of a public elementary school or a public secondary school owned by a private corporation pursuant to a partnership with a state or local agency. This partnership can be structured under the PPEFIA. The private corporation must agree to develop the school facility and, at the end of the term of the agreement, to transfer the school to the educational agency for no additional consideration. (Source: www.troutmansanders.com/mc/art-McNinchDavenport.pdf)

- ✓ Initiate a marketing effort emphasizing the value of education and receipt of a high school degree to targeted Halifax County constituencies.
 - Integrate efforts with school-level programs to increase parental involvement in their children's education.
 - Coordinate efforts with all affected regional partners, including social service, faith-based and law enforcement communities.

GOAL 2: EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Objective 2: Maximize the impact of workforce development programs and augment resources for worker retraining and job placement

In addition to a community's local school systems, additional workforce development resources must be in place to ensure that adults both with and without high school degrees – and those displaced from the workplace – get the attention and training they need to be successful. Efforts must also be made to advertise these resources, and effectively link workforce development programs to area companies' staffing needs. While one local official noted that there is a "chicken and egg" scenario often at play in workforce development – in other words, should workers be training in anticipation of targeted industries – he added that it is important to proactively develop programming to ensure that local workers have the skills necessary to attract quality companies in targeted sectors to the area.

While Halifax County's *Competitive Assessment* report found that a number of local workforce development resources exist in the community, qualitative feedback from focus groups and interviews showed that there are gaps between program availability and local residents' knowledge of these services. For example, though Halifax County has a staffed Workforce Investment Act-mandated One-Stop Center in South Boston, almost none of the participants in the strategy's *Community Input* phase seemed to know about it. The Center offers a suite of assistance programs and retraining resources, but if displaced workers and others seeking work are not aware of them, these services are for naught.

Additional local resources include the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center and its affiliated on-site and off-site institutions; the Regional Center for Applied Technology and Training (RCATT) and Center for Business, Industry, and Government (C-BIG) at Danville Community College; Danville Community College and Southside Virginia Community College themselves; the Center for Innovative Technology in Danville; and the A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership in Martinsville.

Even with these resources, and a high degree of workforce availability, local businesses queried by *Market Street* still complained of difficulty staffing certain high-skill, technology-based positions. Representatives from one of the community's largest employers, Halifax Regional Hospital, also said that they have trouble finding qualified applicants for certain job openings.

Virginia Governor Mark Warner has made workforce preparedness one of the key concerns of his administration. His *Education for a Lifetime* initiative includes efforts

such as the Career Readiness Certificates program and “Race to GED,” an attempt to double the number of Virginians with the equivalent of a high school degree.⁴⁵

Another career awareness and preparedness effort in operation in a number of U.S. communities is the INROADS program. INROADS recruits high school and college students of color interested in pursuing careers in business, engineering, retail, technology, nursing, pharmacy, marketing and sales careers. A Pre-College Component then prepares high school students for higher learning by providing supplemental academic instruction and ACT/SAT preparation. Participants are also given leadership development training, including career guidance and business skill-building workshops. Launched by founder Frank C. Carr in 1970, INROADS began in Chicago with just 25 college student interns and 17 sponsoring corporations. Today, INROADS is an international organization with more than 55 offices serving over 5,500 interns at 700 plus companies.⁴⁶

Maintaining a quality workforce is an ongoing process. Local business and civic organizations, elected leaders, and economic development professionals must do all they can to ensure that Halifax County’s workforce-development system is fully funded and effectively aligned with the needs of existing businesses and target industries. Officials must also ensure that Halifax County parents have the child care resources they need to go to their jobs with the security of knowing their child is in good hands during the workday. Data from Halifax County’s *Competitive Realities* report showed that local availability of child care trails the Commonwealth average by a wide margin.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Effectively market and coordinate existing workforce development resources.
 - Ensure that the full suite of local and regional assets is understood and utilized by displaced workers and job seekers in Halifax County.
 - Organize speaking engagements by local workforce development practitioners to increase awareness of available programs and services.
 - Pursue workforce development linkages with The Prizery, the Career Center, and other local resources.

- ✓ Partner with workforce development providers and local companies to best link training programs with employer needs.
 - Consider development of on-site training programs and paid internships.

⁴⁵ The *Education for a Lifetime* initiative has three parts: (1) increasing the education levels of Virginia’s workforce by doubling the number of GEDs earned in Virginia; (2) creating a career readiness certificate that gives workers a portable workforce credential and shows employers that job seekers have the required job skills, and (3) reorganizing Virginia’s 22 workforce development programs into a more streamlined and effective workforce development system. (Source: <http://www.governor.virginia.gov>)

⁴⁶ INROADS. *Frequently Asked Questions*. 03 March 2004. <<http://www.inroads.org/inroads/inroadsFaq.jsp>>.

- ✓ Partner with SVHED to enhance workforce development resources, programs and classes at the center.
 - Coordinate efforts with local economic development targets, and advertise programs to site selection professionals as local workforce strengths.
 - Investigate additional university-level partnerships to develop industry-specific training at the center, using Danville's Institute for Advanced Learning and Research as a model.
 - Consider co-locating all local workforce development resources at SVHED to serve as a single point-of-service for Halifax County residents.

- ✓ Explore participation in Virginia Economic Bridge's *Linked Workforce* program.⁴⁷

- ✓ Coordinate with Commonwealth officials to implement Governor Warner's Education for a Lifetime programs in Halifax County.
 - Pursue needed monies at all levels to implement programs.

- ✓ Work to develop an INROADS minority youth development program in Halifax County.
 - Effectively advertise the program to eligible youth through all appropriate channels.

- ✓ Develop increased child care capacity and access to quality local providers.
 - Work with local employers to develop and fund on-site child care centers.
 - Partner with local social service and health care providers to increase local child care capacity.

⁴⁷ *Linked Workforce* brings geographically distant workers and employers together through a sub-contracting arrangement. Work in northern Virginia is outsourced to an established company in southern Virginia. This allows off-site technology experts and onsite professionals to work without the necessity of travel or relocation (Source: www.linkedworkforce.org).

GOAL 2: BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Increase of public and private funding for local schools by 5% annually beginning in 2006.
- ✓ Development of a local school facility under the Virginia Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act.
- ✓ Increase of teacher-retention rates by 2% annually.
- ✓ Increase of average teacher salaries by 15% by 2008.
- ✓ Maintenance of local high school dropout rates at 1.0% or below annually.
- ✓ Initiation of a marketing effort advertising the value of receiving a high school degree.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of over-25-year-olds with a college degree by 1.0% annually.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of eligible adults taking classes at SVHED by 1.5% annually.
- ✓ Increase of funding for SVHED by 2.0% annually by 2006.
- ✓ Development of an INROADS program in Halifax County.
- ✓ Increase of number of available child care “slots” by 2% annually, beginning in 2006.

GOAL 2: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Public school dropout rates by grade and cohort.
- High school graduation rates, and number of individuals receiving GEDs.
- Student performance on Virginia Standards of Learning tests, and national standardized tests.
- Number and percentage of graduates attending two- and four-year colleges.
- Annual budget for Halifax County district schools, including all grants and donations.
- Percentage of students whose parent(s) are involved in school-sponsored programs.
- Number of new classes and programs added in area public schools.
- Number of classes held at The Prizery and SVHED.
- K-12 teacher retention rates.
- Net increase in number and percentage of students participating in Advanced Placement courses in County schools.
- Net increase in number and percentage of minority students participating in Advanced Placement courses in County schools.
- Net annual increases in funding for Halifax County schools, and percentage of funding increases from local taxes.
- Number of school facilities developed through Virginia's Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act, and amount of total investments.
- Number of total and net new students participating in local mentoring program.
- Number of Halifax County families participating in "value of education" programs.
- Enrollment rates at SVHED.
- Annual budget at SVHED.
- Percentage of SVHED program graduates, and the number of those at or below poverty level.
- Percentage of SVHED program graduates obtaining jobs after graduation, and average wage of those jobs.
- Percentage of SVHED program graduates remaining in the community for employment.
- Number of new programs and classes at SVHED.
- Number of new career-focused programs and classes at Halifax County public schools.
- Total value of the dedicated budget for career-focused programs.
- Percentage of students taking advantage of career-focused programs, and number of students graduating directly into a targeted trade.

- Total annual and net new local participation in Virginia Education for a Lifetime programs.
- Number of companies participating in the *Linked Workforce* program, and net number of new jobs created through these partnerships.
- Number of minority students and local companies participating in INROADS program.
- Total number of annual and net new child care “slots” in Halifax County, and number of slots per 100 residents compared to Virginia averages.



H a l i f a x
C o u n t y

**Goal 3: Infrastructure
Development & Land Use
Coordination**

GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE COORDINATION

Objective 1: Coordinate public and private efforts to develop enhanced technology, utilities and transportation infrastructure

A community's physical and natural assets, and the laws in place to regulate new development and the provision of utilities infrastructure, are key criteria for businesses looking to expand or relocate in an area, and current residents' desire to protect natural and community character. Localities like Halifax County, transitioning from an agriculturally based economy to one focused on heavy industry and information/technology and services companies, are especially ripe for debates involving land use and growth. Balancing the desire to grow with the charge from many residents to maintain the rural character that makes Halifax County unique is a delicate balancing act. But it is an act made less precarious with the consensus approval of development controls that focus growth in predetermined areas, and set aside valuable natural resources for protection.

With high unemployment, a stagnant tax base, few new housing or building starts and a loss of the area's young people to higher growth areas, Halifax County is ripe for new development and job growth, many residents told *Market Street*. However, many of these same individuals added that growth should not be indiscriminate, and the County's open space, farmland and vistas should be preserved.

Just as smart planning is an effective means to accommodate growth while protecting sensitive natural and renewable resource areas, consensus master planning is also a successful method for providing the infrastructure that serves this new growth. In many ways, they go hand in hand; new development should ideally be channeled to sites either served by utilities, or in a priority zone for extension of existing services.

As a component of Halifax County, South Boston should not see its growth as independent of the County around it, and vice versa. Similarly, new development in the town of Halifax benefits the larger County, as does growth in unincorporated Halifax County for its namesake town. A best-practice solution to ongoing utility and infrastructure issues in the area would be a county-wide authority charged by its component towns and unincorporated areas to manage Halifax County's public services in the best interest of all the County's citizens and businesses. The authority would be guided by a Board of Directors representative of all component towns and constituencies, and would manage existing services and add capacity in concert with priority growth corridors and sites in Halifax County's comprehensive plan.

Ensuring that the County has the requisite infrastructure to be competitive is a broader mission than simply the provision of utilities, however. Focus group and interview respondents also told *Market Street* that Halifax County's telecommunications

infrastructure, its highway network – especially in the north-south direction – and its local airport need to be enhanced if the region is to attract quality companies and enable existing businesses to expand.

On the telecommunications front, a recently awarded \$6 million federal matching grant to install fiber-optic cable through Halifax County as a component of a Southside network from Emporia to Martinsville will greatly enhance local capacity. The Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative, a nonprofit entity formed to administer the funds, will monitor the installation of the fiber-optic backbone, and also assist impacted businesses.⁴⁸

Relative to transportation infrastructure, the US 501 Regional Coalition, a partnership between Amherst, Bedford, Campbell and Halifax Counties, and the city of Lynchburg, has been coordinating local lobbying efforts for Highway 501 improvements for nearly a decade. The group has come up with a Top 10 Improvement Priorities list to advise the Virginia Department of Transportation (V-DOT) on corridor projects in greatest need of dedicated highway funds. All the Coalition localities reached consensus on the projects, which range from lane additions to interchange construction, bypass construction, road relocations, and other projects.

With competition for relocating and expanding firms so fierce between counties, regions, and, indeed, nations, communities must strive at all costs to remain competitive relative to benchmarked areas. Because Commonwealth and local budgets are not projected to have the resources to fully fund a truly expansive suite of local programs, Halifax County's private sector will need to at least partially share the burden of making the area more competitive.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Encourage a joint town-county program – in partnership with key private-sector entities – to develop a Master Plan for a consolidated countywide water and sewer system.
 - Create a countywide Public Service Authority run by an experienced water/sewer executive and a representative Board of Directors to manage local utility systems.
 - Coordinate the provision of utilities infrastructure – especially plumbing – to all Halifax County residences.
 - Align the Master Plan with priority growth corridors and sites in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

- ✓ Continue efforts to explore the feasibility of a consolidated landfill site for the counties of Halifax, Mecklenburg and Charlotte, and other area jurisdictions.

⁴⁸ "Broadband Grant is Awarded to Region." *The Gazette Virginian*, May 19, 2004, p. 1.

- ✓ Maximize efforts to upgrade Halifax County’s broadband, wireless and high-speed Internet capacity.
 - Consider tobacco commission monies as a potential source to augment federal monies for the funding of new infrastructure.
 - Take advantage of all additional Commonwealth and national funding sources.⁴⁹

- ✓ Engage in aggressive efforts at the Commonwealth and federal levels for priority transportation improvements – especially involving Highway 501 North and South, and the bypasses of requisite urban centers.
 - Continue ongoing lobbying efforts by the US 501 Regional Coalition to speed approval of infrastructure and capacity upgrades to Highway 501.
 - Encourage effective partnerships with impacted North Carolina jurisdictions, and with major private business and industry highway users, particularly the trucking industry.
 - Ensure that affected businesses and industries along the route, along with elected officials at all levels, are vocal in their support of these efforts.

- ✓ Ensure that planned improvements to Tuck Airport are accomplished on time and on budget.
 - Actively support efforts for ongoing capacity and facility upgrades to Tuck Airport.
 - Coordinate plans for the creation of a small business and industrial center at the airport.

⁴⁹ For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently made available \$190 million in loans to support rural access to high-speed Internet technology (source: USDA).

GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE COORDINATION

Objective 2: Ensure that vital Halifax County farmland is preserved, along with valuable open space and vistas

Respondents in virtually every focus group and interview conducted by *Market Street* concurred that Halifax County's agricultural heritage was an important component of the community's past, present and future vitality. However, with cost pressures on farmers increasing, and more local growers selling their land or subdividing it for residential development, the agricultural character of Halifax County is increasingly at risk. According to many respondents, pristine open spaces and natural vistas are being compromised – and surface and ground water resources could potentially be adversely affected – by scattershot clusters of manufactured housing and other uncontrolled developments. Many labeled the phenomenon “unsmart” growth, a takeoff on the “smart” growth movement that encourages long-range planning and the use of development controls to effectively manage new development.

With a very limited supply of rental housing, Halifax County residents often have no choice but to rely on manufactured housing for their primary residences. Young people moving from their parents' homes or new transplants to the area have few options for short-term places of residence, and those that remain in the County will likely be forced to buy a home of some kind. Therefore, any effort to manage growth in Halifax County should also include provisions for affordable housing, or incentives to encourage development of multi-family residences in pre-determined high-growth tracts.

Effective long-range planning and land use controls will ensure that the qualities that make Halifax County attractive as a place to live and visit – its farms, open spaces, natural vistas, rivers, streams and lakes, and its rural character – will be preserved even when local job growth creates new development pressures on the County's undeveloped land.

Local officials are currently in the process of updating the Halifax County Comprehensive Plan. The revised Plan will attempt to manage growth by designating specific “planning areas” (similar to growth areas), with a particular focus on multi-family residential, commercial and industrial development. Growth will be encouraged in areas where infrastructure is available, or can be economically extended. The Plan update is being addressed through a Land Development Task Force that the County established in early 2003; with representation from the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, the real estate, agriculture, industrial and business communities, local schools, community-action organizations, and Towns of Halifax and South Boston.

The Task Force has completed an update of the Subdivision Ordinance, and, upon completion of the Comprehensive Plan, will then begin the process of updating Halifax County's Zoning Ordinance, and the zoning classifications of various other County areas. Zoning and long-range planning strategies will be linked with current and future programs that support farmland preservation and timberland management. Halifax County's Agricultural Development Office is coordinating ongoing efforts to implement creative agricultural preservation tools and land "set-aside" programs to ensure that the County's agricultural assets are protected for future generations. These strategies, when married with comprehensive planning efforts and best-practice land-use regulations, will enable Halifax County to aim for the future, but not compromise its past.

Another strategy, proposed by Halifax County Administrator Joe Morgan at a Board of Supervisors meeting on May 24, 2004, is to offer farmers a break on their property taxes in order to encourage them to continue farming their lands and preserve the county's agricultural heritage and rural character. Morgan presented supervisors a draft ordinance on the special assessment, which could potentially be implemented in the 2005 or 2006 tax year. Supervisors are currently considering offering the breaks to farmers only, excluding timber, horticulture or open landowners, according to Morgan. Local officials said that if the ordinance is adopted, it would cost the county around \$400,000 a year and could mean a projected increase of 1.5 to 2 cents per assessed \$100 on real estate taxes, which could potentially be offset by more frequent property reassessments.⁵⁰

ACTION STEPS⁵¹

- ✓ Develop a consensus program to update Halifax County zoning ordinances with conservation zoning components, overlay zones for scenic, historic, and viewshed protection, "smart growth" land use controls, and natural resource protections.
 - Work with town and County planning officials and area economic developers to coordinate and regulate priority areas for development into a codified Land Development Plan.
 - Focus growth on priority transportation corridors, existing high-density residential areas, and town centers with the necessary infrastructure either existing, or that can be feasibly extended.
 - Incorporate recommendations into Halifax County's Comprehensive Plan.
 - Consider the use of incentive zoning (i.e., density bonuses, tax abatements) to encourage the construction of multi-family and affordable housing developments.

⁵⁰ Gazette Virginian. *Supes Ponder Budget, Land Use Tax*. 26 May 2004.
<<http://www.gazettevirginian.com/news1.htm>>.

⁵¹ Many of the programmatic elements of the Halifax County Agricultural Development Office's plan of work are integrated into these Action Steps so that Halifax County's land use and conservation programs are consistent across-the-board.

- ✓ Ensure that County residents interested in purchasing/constructing a wood-frame home are provided assistance if needed.
 - Renew efforts to partner with local wood-frame home developers to make them aware of local demand and connect them with potential homeowners.
 - Engage in local educational efforts to inform residents of the pros and cons of purchasing manufactured housing.
 - Consider efforts to work with local lenders to develop rent-to-own programs in Halifax County.

- ✓ Continue to promote the use of best-practice agricultural conservation tools.
 - Examine the use and implementation of agricultural-forestal districts in Halifax County through a comprehensive community planning process.
 - Coordinate efforts with the County Planning Commission and the Commissioner of Revenue.
 - Promote the use of agricultural preservation tools such as easements, purchase of development rights, etc., through public education and instruction programs.
 - Consider the use of property tax breaks for farmers to encourage preservation of agricultural lands.
 - Maximize participation in Commonwealth and federal “set-aside” programs for agricultural land.
 - Establish relationships and/or memberships with Commonwealth and national entities involved in agricultural preservation.
 - Encourage lobbying efforts at the Virginia and federal levels for more funding assistance to localities for programs such as Purchase of Development Rights, purchase of conservation easements, and similar protection/preservation programs.

- ✓ Promote sustainable forestry practices and timberland reforestation programs.
 - Effectively publicize ongoing programs to reseed deforested tracts, and encourage reforestation of certain upland hardwood tracts in Halifax County.
 - Partner with the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation and its ongoing land conservation programs.

GOAL 3: BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Development of a countywide water and sewer Master Plan.
- ✓ Creation of a countywide Public Service Authority.
- ✓ Reduction of percentage of Halifax County residences without water and sewer connectivity to below 2% by 2008.
- ✓ Development of a consolidated landfill for Halifax, Mecklenburg and Charlotte Counties.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of local businesses with broadband communications capacity by 5% annually, beginning in 2006.
- ✓ Receipt of Commonwealth approval for funding of top 10 Highway 501 upgrades.
- ✓ Increase of Tuck Airport field-based aircraft and aircraft operations 2% annually, beginning in 2006.
- ✓ Development of a small business and industrial center at Tuck Airport.
- ✓ Development of revised Halifax County “smart growth” zoning codes.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of wood-frame homes affordable to residents earning 60% of the County median by 1.5% annually, beginning in 2007.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of Halifax County housing that is multi-family to 10% by 2010.
- ✓ Decrease of loss of County agricultural land to less than 1.5% annually, beginning in 2006.
- ✓ Increase of protection of designated Halifax County natural resource lands to 100% by 2010.
- ✓ Increase of percentage of Halifax County wood-frame homes versus manufactured homes by 2% annually by 2008.
- ✓ Initiation of “one-for-one” reseeded program for deforested woodlands.

GOAL 3: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Percentage of Halifax County homes and businesses connected to water and sewer systems, and year-by-year percentage increases.
- Annual funds dedicated to countywide water and sewer improvements.
- Annual revenue derived from countywide water and sewer systems.
- Annual tonnage deposited in Halifax, Mecklenburg and Charlotte County consolidated landfill, and percentage of available landfill capacity year-to-year.
- Percentage of Halifax County homes and businesses with broadband telecommunications capacity.
- Total Commonwealth and national funding dedicated to Halifax County transportation improvements, and percentage of those monies targeted for U.S. Highway 501 infrastructure upgrades.
- Average daily traffic counts on Halifax County roads and highways, and year-to-year increases.
- Various Tuck Airport measures, including dedicated funding for infrastructure and capacity upgrades, airplanes based at the field, daily aircraft operations, runway lengths, and others.
- Number of companies and employees located at the Tuck Airport small business and industrial center.
- Economic impact of the small business and industrial center at Tuck Airport.
- Percentage of Halifax County agricultural and natural resource lands protected by land-use and development controls.
- Annual number and net increase of affordable housing availability in Halifax County, and percentage of low-income residents who cannot afford a wood-frame home.
- Number and percentage of wood-frame and manufactured housing developed in Halifax County annually, and year-to-year.
- Percentage of Halifax County housing that is multi-family, and number of new units constructed annually.
- Number of trees deforested, and percentage of County timberland lost per year.
- Number and type of trees reseeded after deforestation.



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Goal 4: Leadership & Vision

GOAL 4: LEADERSHIP & VISION

Objective 1: Develop increased capacity for local leadership

In a focus group conducted by *Market Street* for local high school students, one of the respondents said, “The same people run everything,” and they tend to be older and resistant to change. Respondents in other focus groups noted that the County’s “best and brightest” leaving the area after high school and not returning also contributes to a lack of changeover among local leadership.

Regardless of the cause, the effect is that certain Halifax County constituencies feel left out of the local decision-making process and disinvested from County affairs. In order to effectively move forward as a united entity, Halifax County will need to fully leverage the leadership contributions of its many component groups. These include individuals of all ages, races, ethnicities and income brackets.

Most often, leaders are not born, but developed. Many communities – Halifax County included – have institutionalized leadership development programs that nurture future decision-makers and risk-takers and refine their abilities into true leadership capacity. The Halifax County Chamber’s leadership program has been helpful, and many of the County’s current leaders cite the training they received there as a critical component in their development. However, with the County’s economy struggling, and divisions between different local governments and officials threatening to staunch progressive area programs, the time to broaden Halifax County’s leadership base has come.

Expanding and diversifying County leadership will take time and effort, but more importantly, money. Additional funding must be sourced to add capacity to existing leadership development programs, and create new strategies and structures for augmented local participation. As with other elements of Halifax County’s *Community Strategic Plan*, the private sector will have to work closely with public-sector entities to bring these actions to fruition.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Target additional revenue sources to enhance ongoing efforts to broaden the Halifax County Chamber of Commerce’s leadership program to all regional constituencies.
 - Maximize public and private sector contributions to local leadership development efforts.
 - Ensure that the new Junior Leadership program in Halifax County schools is effectively implemented.
 - Formalize local involvement of adult and junior leadership program graduates to leverage their abilities to serve as leaders and affect local change.

- ✓ Consider the development of a Community Leadership Council involving representatives from all areas, cultures and income levels in Halifax County.
 - Position the Council as a sounding board for priority community issues and proposed grassroots solutions.
 - Institutionalize a feedback loop with local elected and appointed officials.

GOAL 4: LEADERSHIP & VISION

Objective 2: Enhance the community morale of Halifax County residents

While many area residents told *Market Street* that local optimism about the future was admirably high considering recent losses in Halifax County employment, continued infighting between local leaders, and an improving national economy that seems to be passing the community by, others said that a creeping negativity and defeatism was beginning to emerge in the County. Local successes like the development of Riverstone Technology Park, the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center and the Prizery were sources of community pride, but the glow of these accomplishments was dimming from the resignations of respected County officials, continued high local unemployment, and ongoing educational challenges.

After announcing his resignation as executive director of the Halifax County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) on May 10, 2004, Scott Morris commented on local “negativism.” The following report is from the South Boston *News and Record*:

(Morris) noted, the position of executive director of the IDA should not be a political one. “This person can’t spend time as a political figure, beating back the flies. He has to devote his time and energy into trying to bring jobs to this community.” Morris said he has found that many people in the community are not happy about the negativism that has developed in many quarters. “I think you just have to look at what’s happened here over the past few months. You are losing probably the best county administrator that can be found, as well as an outstanding superintendent of schools (he was referring to the announced retirements of County Administrator Joe Morgan and Superintendent of Schools Dennis Witt). And now my position. I feel that the leadership of this community has to step up to the plate and make some changes to unite our efforts. I’m really disappointed that negative attitudes may really push this community back, and I hope the ‘Visioning’ process that the community has undertaken will help to correct that.”⁵²

Community morale is an important component of many aspects of economic development. If displaced workers feel that job prospects are not forthcoming, the likelihood they will return to school for an Associate’s degree or professional training is diminished. Likewise, high school and college graduates will be less likely to remain in Halifax County if they feel their prospects for success are weak. Lastly, if local morale is low and expresses itself in the attitudes of area workers, prospective new residents or companies will pick up on this negativity and potentially choose not to relocate to Halifax County.

These issues also apply to local media, which some in Halifax County feel exacerbate controversial issues to the detriment of community unity and local leadership capacity. A

⁵² News and Record. *Morris Resigns*. 10 May 2004. <<http://www.thenewsrecord.com/story1.htm>>.

growing movement in the United States is focused on what is called “civic journalism,” a new way of viewing the media’s role in the community it serves. According to the non-profit Pew Center for Civic Journalism, “Civic journalism is both a philosophy and a set of values... At its heart is a belief that journalism has an obligation to public life – an obligation that goes beyond just telling the news or unloading lots of facts. The way we do our journalism affects the way public life goes. Journalism can help empower a community or it can help disable it.”⁵³

A study of trends in civic journalism from 1994 to 2001 commissioned by the Pew Center found that:⁵⁴

- Some form of civic journalism was practiced in at least a fifth of all American newspapers, in almost every state and in every region.
- The goals of news organizations show a strong commitment to the traditional public news values of informing the public and, to a lesser extent, the civic and democratic values of problem-solving and increased deliberation.
- New ways of reporting the news have emerged that help citizens deliberate on important problems, address and solve them, and increase their voices in the community and in the pages of the papers.
- There is significant (though not yet conclusive) evidence of impact in communities where civic journalism is practiced. About a third of all cases showed some community/newspaper partnerships. More than half reported evidence of improved public deliberation. Other results included: use of projects by others; improved citizens skills; new civic organizations formed; and increased volunteerism.

Current realities in Halifax County should not be diminished or sugarcoated. But a concerted effort by Halifax County leaders at all levels to focus the community on a positive future and emphasize the progressive actions that all local residents can take to facilitate improved prospects for growth is a dynamic way to ensure that Halifax County’s vision is focused on a brighter future rather than a challenging recent past.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Formalize community involvement in Halifax County initiatives and programs.
 - Initiate Countywide Community Meetings to familiarize area stakeholders with County leadership, and expose them to current and planned local improvement efforts.

⁵³ Pew Center for Civic Journalism. *Doing Civic Journalism*. 11 May 2004.
<<http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/>>.

⁵⁴ Friedland, Lewis A. and Sandy Nichols. *Measuring Civic Journalism’s Progress: A Report Across a Decade of Activity*. A Study Conducted for the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, September 2002, p. 2-3.

- Publish a Halifax County Annual Report brochure mailed to all local residents summarizing the accomplishments of the previous year and presenting priority action plans for the coming 12 months.
- ✓ Coordinate official, County-sponsored resident forums to discuss broad-based community issues and devise cooperative solutions.
 - Schedule ongoing, formalized sessions to discuss issues such as affordable housing; race relations; interaction between local workers and company management; and others.
 - Utilize these forums to initiate constructive dialogue and develop responsive programming.
- ✓ Strive to partner with local Halifax County media in the practice of civic journalism.
 - Encourage the media to broaden civic capacity, facilitate local organizational development, increase citizen volunteerism, and generate constructive public deliberation on local issues.
 - Investigate the use of Adelphia Channel 12 as a forum for the expression of local news and views, and as a tool for effective community-building.

GOAL 4: LEADERSHIP & VISION

Objective 3: Work to build greater trust, cooperation and effective partnerships between South Boston and Halifax County leadership

On April 8, 2004, over 150 Halifax County citizens gathered to begin the community input process for **Vision 2020**. At the end of the session, tables of residents were divided up, and one group was asked, “If you could change one thing about Halifax County right now, what would it be?” The following are selected responses given to this question:

- “Provide more enlightened County leadership and citizenry...”
- “Leaders and citizens would accept and appreciate each other’s differences through greater cooperation, enabling us to be a more pleasant and progressive community.”
- “One government for County – or, as first step, cooperate more.”
- “Intergovernmental cooperation between all governing bodies and town councils, authorities, communities...”

These responses are snapshots of what was a pervasive theme at that meeting: Greater cooperation is needed between town and County leadership. Time and again in focus groups and interviews, these sentiments were repeated by citizens frustrated over the continuing turf battles and bickering between officials of South Boston and Halifax County.

The global realities of the New Economy have redefined the nature of competitive economic development. No longer are cities vying against cities for projects, or counties versus counties – even regions versus regions on some occasions. Increasingly, the units of competition are other nations. Therefore, a lack of cooperation between smaller communities such as South Boston and Halifax County is unproductive and anti-competitive in today’s economic landscape.

Local officials must acknowledge that the optimal way to compete for projects is by showing a united front to every prospect. This includes, if possible, regional cooperation between multiple counties. If a County and its component governments cannot get along, companies and site selectors will likely assume that the community is dysfunctional and not a stable prospect for relocation, regardless of the incentives offered. In fact, local economic development professionals said that the high number of comments they receive from Virginia officials regarding the negativity between Halifax County and South Boston is alarming, and should be a wake-up call for the two governments that continued acrimony between the town and County is filtering to the Commonwealth level, and potentially costing the area economic development leads.

Therefore, it is imperative that elected and appointed leadership of South Boston and Halifax County put aside historic differences and grudges and partner for the future benefit of the entire community.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Organize formal planning retreats for town and County elected and appointed leaders.
 - Employ a professional facilitator to ensure that the discourse is amicable and constructive.

- ✓ Encourage regular feedback sessions between government officials and top business and community leaders to allow important local stakeholders to monitor the progress of ongoing town-County efforts and initiatives.

- ✓ Pursue effective town-County departmental and programmatic consolidations when determined to be consensus-based solutions for progressive operational change.
 - Conduct cost-benefit analyses to determine the projected budgetary savings of proposed consolidations.
 - Continue to pursue efforts to consolidate the town and County Industrial Development Authorities.

GOAL 4: BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Increase of minority participation in the Halifax County Chamber of Commerce leadership program to 15% by 2010.
- ✓ Participation in community events and initiatives by at least 50% of leadership program graduates by 2006.
- ✓ Development of a Community Leadership Council.
- ✓ Holding of at least two Countywide Community Meetings per year, beginning in 2006.
- ✓ Publishing of a Halifax County Annual Report.
- ✓ Holding of at least two town/County leadership retreats per year, beginning in 2006.

GOAL 4: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Total annual funding committed to formalized leadership programs in Halifax County.
- Number of participants in Halifax County Chamber of Commerce leadership program and Junior Leadership program.
- Percentage of minority participants in all leadership programs.
- Percentage of leadership program graduates that commit to participating in local development efforts.
- Number of Community Leadership Council meetings held per year, and average attendance at meetings.
- Number of community programs originated through Community Leadership Council meetings.
- Number of Countywide Community Meetings held per year, and average attendance at meetings.
- Number and percentage of town and County elected officials participating in each Countywide Community Meeting.
- Number of County-sponsored resident forums held per year, and number of responsive programs generated from forums.
- Percentage of locally generated media stories that reflect positive/negative news events.
- Number and percentage of media stories that reflect the style of “civic” journalism.
- Number of formalized instances of public deliberation, number of new organizations formed, and number and percentage of local volunteers per year.
- Annual subscription and readership rates for local media.
- Number of town/County leadership retreats, and percentage of officials who participate.
- Number of “feedback sessions” between town/County officials and local business and community leaders.
- Number of town and County departments consolidated.
- Annual cost savings from departmental consolidations.



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Goal 5: Quality of Life

GOAL 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective 1: Increase the social services and public assistance capacity in Halifax County

With more local residents out of work in Halifax County, these individuals and their families are increasingly in need of aid. This aid could take many forms, including provisions of food or shelter, donations of clothes, counseling services, and other assistance programs. While there are existing services available in Halifax County, respondents told *Market Street* that awareness of these programs is not pervasive among targeted constituencies or even many in the assistance community itself. Effectively coordinating available services into an easy-to-access system of care is a positive first step towards a goal of treating every local citizen in need.

In addition, new capacity is required to provide a full suite of social services to middle-to-lower income County residents. This challenge is not exclusive to Halifax County; most municipalities struggle to fund all the programs necessary to treat their at-risk population. But this reality should not diminish local officials' attempts to provide the fullest possible range of social services and public assistance programs.

Market Street was also told by a number of focus group and interview respondents that many local residents are in need of education/information in the "life skills" area. These programs would focus on schooling young adults and new parents on basic procedures for securing loans, buying insurance, and raising children, among others.

A potentially untapped resource in Halifax County for provision of enhanced social services and public assistance programs is the area's faith-based community. Just as town and County officials can broaden their capacity to perform by partnering in unified efforts for change, so too can individual churches expand their influence through greater unity and cooperation. A united faith-based community in Halifax County – pooling resources and programs – has the potential to create truly robust community-serving assets in a broad range of categories.

Resources like the federal Administration for Children and Families' Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) help faith-based and community organizations increase their effectiveness and enhance their ability to provide social services to those most in need. The CCF administers two grant programs: the Demonstration Program and the Targeted Capacity Building Program. In 2002, CCF's first year of operation, a total of \$24.7 million was awarded to 21 intermediary organizations.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Administration for Children and Families. *Compassion Capital Fund*. 13 May 2004. <<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccf/>>.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Fully leverage and advertise available social service resources in Halifax County.
 - Broaden local residents' awareness of programs at the regional level as well, including available services in Mecklenburg and Pittsylvania Counties, and other Southside localities.

- ✓ Work with existing Halifax County providers, and Commonwealth and local officials to develop enhanced social service offerings for area residents.
 - Source all available social services funding at every level of government.

- ✓ Work to build greater public-serving capacity through enhanced unity and cooperation within Halifax County's active faith-based community.
 - Partner with the faith-based community to provide services and assistance for the area's needy.
 - Pursue grants through the federal *Compassion Capital Fund*.
 - Consider the development of additional public assistance programs administered by a collective of area churches.

- ✓ Coordinate efforts to secure local offices and facilities of national non-profit and public assistance organizations.

- ✓ Develop adult "life-skills" training programs in Halifax County.
 - Focus "life-skills" training efforts on young adults or transplants to the area interested in buying a home, starting a checking account, obtaining health insurance, etc.
 - Expand existing programs that provide basic parenting-skills training for interested parents and families.

GOAL 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective 2: Work to improve local health issues

Research conducted for Halifax County's *Competitive Realities* report highlighted negative trends in many of the County's measures of health. Compared to the Commonwealth of Virginia, Halifax County has:

- A higher percentage of non-marital births.
- Notably higher percentages of girls 15 to 17, and 18 to 19 having babies.
- A higher infant death rate.
- A higher death rate for the overall population.
- Higher incidences of heart disease; malignant tumors; respiratory diseases; unintentional injuries; pneumonia and influenza; diabetes and liver disease.
- A suicide rate almost double that of Virginia.

Because Halifax County's population is older on average than Virginia and the U.S., many of these health issues will only become more acute as time passes. In addition, stronger efforts must be made to educate local teenagers on the negative consequences of early pregnancies. Local resources like the Halifax County YMCA, which provides a quality exercise facility for adults and children, should be taken full advantage of to ensure that local residents get healthy amounts of physical activity.

Numerous focus group and interview respondents also told *Market Street* that Halifax County has escalating drug-abuse problems. Although many noted that these problems are concentrated in particular neighborhoods and streets, the psychological effects of drug-related issues on the community are pervasive. From constant mentions of the problem in the local media, to invasive searches for drugs at local schools, the issue of drug use in Halifax County is detrimental to the community's overall outlook, and the perception of the County among non-residents.

Currently, there are few after-school options for County youth to keep them engaged during the afternoon and early-evening hours, when numbers show their propensity to engage in drug use or sales is greatest. However, a number of potential after-school programs and facilities provide Halifax County officials with further choices to broaden the community's array of after-school activities for area youth. Among these are:

- *4-H Afterschool*: The well-known 4-H organization – already very active in Halifax County – also provides after-school programming in participating communities. (<http://www.4hafterschool.org/>).
- *Junior Achievement Afterschool*: This program is a national initiative designed to offer localities quality educational after-school programming. The organization's after-school activities utilize a variety of Junior Achievement's K-12 business and

economic programs to create engaging after-school experiences for local at-risk children. (<http://www.ja.org/afterschool/default.shtml>).

- *Boys and Girls Clubs of America*: These youth facilities are open every day, after school and on weekends, and are staffed by full-time, trained youth development professionals and volunteers. Annual dues range from \$5 to \$10 per child, per year. Start-up costs for a Boys and Girls Club run from approximately \$100,000 to \$175,000, while annual operating costs range from \$125,000 to \$175,000. In many communities, corporate donations help allay the costs of starting and running a Club (www.bcga.org).
- *Big Brothers Big Sisters of America*: Founded in 1904, Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. In 2002, the organization served more than 200,000 youth ages five through 18. The organization has two core programs: Community-based, in which volunteers provide youth with one-on-one time and attention in their communities, typically two to four times a month; and Big Brothers Big Sisters in Schools, where volunteers meet with their “littles” once a week, on average, during the academic year. (www.bbbsa.org).

Whatever the means, County leaders must take proactive steps to encourage community-based, inclusive solutions to the health and drug concerns affecting their population.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Conduct local health education seminars with free health screenings and provision of basic services and procedures.
 - Effectively advertise the seminars to ensure those residents most in need are aware of the services and information provided.
- ✓ Work to augment provision of free or low-cost medical services in Halifax County.
 - Initiate efforts to open a full-service free clinic in the community.
- ✓ Fully leverage existing and potential programs developed within the County’s faith-based community.
- ✓ Coordinate efforts to combat Halifax County’s high incidences of drug-related activity.
 - Fully market available counseling and substance-abuse resources, including the local Southside Community Services Board and the Halifax County United Way.
 - Enhance existing youth programs and consider development of quality after-school options for local youth.
 - Consider strategies to expand the staffing presence of local law enforcement.
 - Determine local residents’ willingness to pay higher taxes for this purpose.

GOAL 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective 3: Augment Halifax County's stock of athletic fields, formal parkspaces and recreational amenities

An important component of quality of life is the availability of recreational amenities and public parkspace. According to Richard Florida, author of the influential book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, creative people “value active outdoor recreation very highly. They are drawn to places and communities where many outdoor activities are prevalent – both because they enjoy these activities, and because their presence is seen as a signal that the place is amenable to the broader creative lifestyle.”⁵⁶

Florida asserts that creativity is now the defining feature of economic life, “because new technologies, new industries, new wealth and all other good economic things flow from it.”⁵⁷ Florida says the so-called “creative” workers that foster these new developments, “Gravitate to stimulating creative environments – to places that offer not only opportunities and amenities, but openness to diversity.”⁵⁸

City size is not necessarily a make-or-break criterion for New Economy companies. In fact, smaller communities often have the lower cost, welcoming, natural-amenity rich setting that knowledge workers enjoy. Cities such as Asheville, North Carolina; Taos, New Mexico; Ashland, Oregon; and others, are able to compete for New Economy jobs because their business climates are well positioned for information-based firms.

Virtually every focus group and interviewee cited Halifax County's natural amenities as a tremendous local resource. Some said that the area's rich variety of outdoor activities is the reason they remain in the community. To fully realize the potential of local recreational resources to attract and retain creative workers and firms – and also to augment the quality of life for existing residents – local officials should strive to increase the awareness, availability and variety of local outdoor amenities. These goals should be effectively linked with programs coordinated by the County's tourism office, and also efforts by local developers to communicate Halifax County's strengths to the professional relocation community.

Facilities like the Halifax County YMCA also provide important environments for recreation for all local constituencies. Efforts must be made to ensure that every local resident that desires access to these facilities is provided that opportunity, either through discounted or sponsored memberships, special no-fee usage days, and other inclusiveness strategies. A free Community Youth Center open to all Halifax County children is another means to provide affordable recreational outlets for area youth.

⁵⁶ Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002, p. 173.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 21.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 11.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Source potential funding streams for upgrades to existing outdoor facilities, and development of new County parks, athletic fields and children's play areas.
 - Pursue grant options from the tobacco commission, and other Commonwealth and federal sources.

- ✓ Effectively link available outdoor amenities into a compelling package of available recreational options for residents and visitors.
 - Develop attractive marketing materials and brochures to advertise Halifax County's natural amenities to tourism and site-selection professionals.

- ✓ Provide recreational opportunities for the full spectrum of area residents.
 - Partner with the Halifax County YMCA to maximize the availability of reduced-fee or no-cost memberships.
 - Work to develop a Community Youth Center with a swimming pool and other recreational amenities.

- ✓ Continue efforts to develop a "rails-to-trails" network in Halifax County.
 - Coordinate with local employers to position the network as a viable commuting option for area workers.
 - Position the network as an additional tourist amenity.
 - Market the network's proposed linkages to the Riverstone Technology Park to "creative class" executives as an employee-friendly asset for locating their companies at the Park.

GOAL 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective 4: Broaden the entertainment options available to Halifax County teens and young adults

While Halifax County will never boast the same breadth of entertainment-related activities as a Richmond, Northern Virginia, or even a college town like Charlottesville, the County can nevertheless work to broaden the array of choices for teens and young adults to spend their free time. These strategies can be as simple as making a compelling argument to a national or regional coffeehouse or bookstore chain that an untapped demand for their services exists in Halifax County, to a full-scale attempt at developing a dynamic lifestyle-and-entertainment facility in the community.

Regardless of the chosen means to stimulate nightlife and entertainment options in the County, many focus group respondents and interviewees told *Market Street* that the community suffers for its lack of “things to do” for young people. Bored teens are more likely to experiment with drugs or commit petty crimes, while a static entertainment scene is a prime factor in young people’s decisions to leave the community after high school and not return once their college years are over. There are exceptions to this scenario, surely, but on the whole Halifax County was said to be an unappealing place for young singles and teenagers.

Other respondents told *Market Street* that certain existing arts and culture resources were perceived – rightly or wrongly – as serving a limited audience in South Boston and Halifax County. For example, The Prizery was commended by virtually every focus group participant and interviewee as a tremendous local resource, but others said its reach was confined to middle and upper-income residents, and did not penetrate the communities in the far reaches of Halifax County. Without a public transportation system in Halifax County, some residents were said to have no viable means to even reach The Prizery. Local officials must strive to disseminate to all local constituencies the message that The Prizery is not a “South Boston asset,” but serves the entire community.

Besides The Prizery, the Halifax County Little Theater, the South Boston-Halifax County Museum of Fine Arts and History, the World of Sports, and other amenities, area town centers in various stages of revitalization also contribute to the County’s overall leisure capacity.

Through its Destination Downtown South Boston organization, the town of South Boston is currently applying for Virginia Main Street status for the town’s historic core. Though they have applied before, local officials are confident that this latest attempt will finally secure a Main Street designation. At that time, the town will hire a Main Street Manager, and set up a local office to manage ongoing revitalization efforts. While the central core’s façades and streetscapes are attractive and well managed – and retail vacancies are

scarce – one local official estimated that the upper floors of downtown buildings are almost 60 percent vacant. These spaces represent a myriad of opportunities for loft development, live/work scenarios, and other strategies to energize downtown’s streets during the day and at night. Tamyra Vest, the South Boston official coordinating Main Street designation efforts, said that mixed-use development in Downtown South Boston is definitely on the town’s radar, and is a strategy that will be pursued as the Main Street process continues.

The town of Halifax is also working to upgrade the look and feel of its central core. A \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant awarded to Halifax County in May of 2003 was the stimulus for the revitalization of the town’s historic business district. Grant monies will fund sidewalk improvements, façade enhancements, new signage, and a general removal of visual and physical blight from the area. According to Halifax Town Manager Carl Espy, “The aim of the Halifax Revitalization Project is to provide economic opportunity and quality of life for those who work or visit here and those who call the town home.”⁵⁹

In the end, as many respondents noted, one of the most compelling reasons for young people to return to Halifax County – or decide to move there for the first time – would be the availability of quality jobs. Thus, any efforts to make the community more dynamic for teens and young adults must be seen in the context of overall efforts to revitalize the local economy.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Consider contracting to perform a local retail gap analysis to study the potential local demand for youth-serving retail and/or entertainment options such as coffee houses, live-music clubs, movie theaters and bookstores.
 - Utilize the study results to develop a retail recruitment program for stores that fill a youth-serving niche in Halifax County.

- ✓ Partner with The Prizery to maximize the impact of its programs and facilities.
 - Work with community leaders at all levels to introduce The Prizery’s offerings to constituencies currently unaware of its resources.
 - Formalize The Prizery’s status as a community meeting place and arts-and-culture asset for the whole of Halifax County by holding countywide events there and partnering with County municipalities and organizations to hold exhibits, classes, lectures and other events in Prizery facilities.

⁵⁹ Halifax County, Virginia. *Halifax Streetscape funding approved*. 25 May 2004. <<http://www.halifax.com/county/halfhome.htm>>.

- ✓ Continue efforts to revitalize Halifax County town centers as arts and entertainment destinations.
 - Ensure that Downtown South Boston's anticipated Virginia Main Street status, and the town of Halifax's improvement efforts, are leveraged to their full extents.

- ✓ Partner with County schools to organize interesting after-school and weekend activities for area youth.
 - Consider providing sanctioned transportation services to take children to and from regional destinations.

- ✓ Communicate with local law enforcement representatives to ensure that young people are treated respectfully when congregating in public places.

GOAL 5: BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Increase of available social service programs in Halifax County by 2% per year by 2007.
- ✓ Location of two local offices of national non-profit organizations by 2007.
- ✓ Development of at least one adult “life-skills” training curriculum at a local facility by 2006.
- ✓ Lowering of all Halifax County major health indices to Virginia levels by 2014.
- ✓ Development of a free health clinic in Halifax County.
- ✓ Decrease of local drug use by 50% by 2009.
- ✓ Increase of number of Halifax County law enforcement personnel by 15% by 2008.
- ✓ Development of a Community Youth Center in Halifax County.
- ✓ Development of a “rails-to-trails” network in Halifax County.
- ✓ Location of a national-chain bookstore or coffeehouse in Halifax County by 2008.
- ✓ Reduction of average age of Halifax County residents to 36.0 years old by 2014.
- ✓ Securing of Virginia Main Street status for Downtown South Boston.
- ✓ Achievement of retail vacancy rates of 3% or below for Downtown South Boston and Downtown Halifax by 2009.

GOAL 5: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number of available social service facilities and programs.
- Total funding dedicated to social service programs, number of users and percentage of total population taking advantage of social service programs.
- Number of faith-based social service and public assistance initiatives/programs, and total funding dedicated to these programs per year.
- Total number and percentage of individuals taking advantage of faith-based community social service programs.
- Amount of funding secured from the *Compassion Capital Fund*, and number of programs funded with these monies.
- Number of local offices of national non-profit organizations, and total number of residents served per year.
- Number of “life-skills” training classes offered in Halifax County, and number of class attendees per year.
- Number of local health education seminars, number of free health screenings and free or low-cost services provided, number of attendees at these seminars, and number and percentage of attendees taking advantage of free and low-cost services.
- Amount of funding secured for free or low-cost medical services.
- Number of free health clinics in Halifax County, and number and percentage of residents using these services per year.
- Number of free and/or low-cost health services offered through the faith-based community, and number of individuals taking advantage of these services.
- Number of drug-related arrests in Halifax County per year, and number of residents being treated locally for drug-related problems.
- Number and net increase of law enforcement personnel year-to-year.
- Total funds secured for upgrades or new construction of outdoor facilities, play areas, parks and athletic fields.
- Attendance at Halifax County national parks and monetary contributions to the local economy per year.
- Number of residents with memberships at the YMCA, and net increases year-to-year.
- Number of YMCA members with discount or subsidized memberships.
- Amount of funding secured for a Community Youth Center, and number of children using the facility.

- Amount of funding dedicated to a Halifax County “rails-to-trails” network, and number of users of the system per year.
- Number of Riverstone Technology Park employees who commute to work via the “rails-to-trails” network.
- Number and percentage of local residents ages 14 to 35 who would patronize a chain-store coffeehouse, bookstore or movie theater in Halifax County.
- Number of national youth-serving retail chains in Halifax County, and total monies invested in these developments.
- Various Prizery measures, including number of programs and classes, number of attendees at programs, classes and events, number of community meetings held on site and average attendance, number of events hosted by Halifax County municipalities at The Prizery, and others.
- Retail and office vacancy rates in Downtown South Boston, Downtown Halifax, and other County town centers.
- Total annual contribution of town center businesses to Halifax County tax receipts.
- Number of after-school and weekend events coordinated for County youth, and average attendance at events.



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Conclusion

CONCLUSION

The goals, objectives and action steps put forth in this *Community Strategic Plan* are a starting point for progressive and lasting change in Halifax County. Through the work of the Steering Committee and a broad community input process, these goals and objectives took shape. The language of this document was informed by the words and phrases Halifax County citizens used to describe their vision for the year 2020, and the strategies needed to realize it. Ultimately, the plan's success will also be the charge of Halifax County stakeholders committed to achieving a promising future for the community they love and cherish.

Changing Halifax County's current economic situation will require patience, persistence, cooperation and a steadfast belief in the vision of a stronger community through dynamic partnerships and the inclusion of all area constituencies in local improvement efforts. To do otherwise will compromise Halifax County's chances for realizing the progressive future it developed through the **Vision 2020** process. A vision without action is just that – a vision. The Action Steps in this *Community Strategic Plan* represent a means to turn this vision into reality – a platform to involve all residents in the effort to make Halifax County a place their children, and their children's children, will be proud to call home.

Next Steps

Although this *Community Strategic Plan* is a blueprint for the next five to ten years in Halifax County, priorities change. As goals and objectives are accomplished, local focus may shift and the ideas and actions in this document should be changed to reflect this. Accordingly, the final component of the County's strategic visioning process will be *Implementation Guidelines*. This document will focus on the agencies, actors and efforts needed to successfully implement the goals recommended in the *Community Strategic Plan*. The *Implementation Guidelines* report will include:

Program Assessments and Enhancements

- Once the strategy is final, a review of the existing program capacity in Halifax County must occur. The "players" in each area will be listed and a brief capacity assessment completed. The Steering Committee will be essential in reviewing the current assets and gaps in capacity.

Timetable

- The Steering Committee and *Market Street* will jointly develop a timetable for the *Implementation Guidelines*. The timetable will focus on the first year's activities. The timetable must be updated over time to address changing realities.

Communications Guidelines

- An effective communications effort will increase the probability of successful implementation. The primary considerations of the Communications Guidelines are

the “rollout” of the strategy, distributing executive summary brochures, preparing a PowerPoint or other presentation for a speaker’s bureau, and assisting with press and media relations.

- *Market Street* will prepare an Executive Summary brochure, while offering guidance on a comprehensive roll-out process.

Funding Allocation

- With the strategy finalized, *Market Street* will work with the Steering Committee to determine if any funding reallocations are needed for implementation.

Goal Implementation

- Each goal will be analyzed considering the Halifax County’s leadership team organizational structure and the County program assessments. This analysis is necessary to determine exactly who will be responsible for acting on and implementing these goals.

At the end of this process, Halifax County leaders will have a blueprint for a positive and progressive local future – a plan that embodies local citizens’ vision for sustainable and inclusive community and economic development.



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Glossary of Terms

MARKET STREET SERVICES GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*The following terms are defined within the context of Market Street's work. Glossaries from such federal websites as the **Census Bureau** and the **Bureau of Labor Statistics** were used to define certain terms. Other government and **economic development** resources were also used. **Boldface type** within a definition indicates that term is also in the Glossary.*

ACCRA: Formally known as the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association, ACCRA is considered the authoritative source for **Cost of Living** estimates for most **Metropolitan Statistical Areas** and other urban places.

Age distribution: Published by the **Census Bureau**, a study of the population's age characteristics by looking at what percentage of the total the different age groupings represent. While they can vary, typically the following groupings are used: 17 and under, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, and 75 and over.

Average annual pay: A statistic provided by the **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)**. According to BLS, the figure includes, "in addition to **salaries**...bonuses, the cash value of meals and lodging when supplied, tips and other gratuities, and, in some states, employer contributions to certain deferred compensation plans, such as 401(k) plans and stock options."

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA): United States government agency that provides economic statistical information such as personal **income**, **per capita income**, total **earnings** and **employment** by industry, and population.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): United States government agency that provides economic statistical information such as **unemployment**, **unemployment rates**, **average annual pay**, and total **employment** by industry.

Business costs: The expenses and regulations associated with conducting business including real estate, labor, production, and utility costs, permitting fees, taxes, and government financial incentives.

Business climate: The environment in which companies operate and employees must live. To characterize that environment, *Market Street* collects an appropriate combination of primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data. Factors that *Market Street* considers include educational opportunities, **workforce** quality and availability, transportation, communication, and energy **infrastructure**, **business costs**, and such **quality of life** concerns as health care, crime, housing, and cultural opportunities.

Business clusters: Geographic concentrations of related businesses and institutions that benefit from close proximity, including workers, producers, buyers, sellers, competitors, partners, researchers, service companies, and public agencies in a given

field. Target business clusters are those that have been recommended as part of a strategic development plan.

Capital improvement programs: A government budget and schedule of construction for developing transportation networks, sewer and water systems, and public facilities such as schools and parks. Most programs have short-term and long-term projects identified.

Census Bureau: United States government agency that conducts the decennial census and provides that data, as well as some interim estimates and forecasted data, to the public. Information available on their website includes population, age, **race**, **ethnicity**, education, housing, and commuting data. The Bureau also publishes County Business Patterns, which include **employment sector** data pertaining to total **employment**, annual **payroll**, and total **establishments**.

Community development: A comprehensive approach to improving the **quality of life**, wealth, and competitive capacity of an area through the combined efforts of citizens, businesses, and the government. In *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, Edward John Kaiser and David R. Godschalk define community development as the “process by which citizens and local government officials identify and seek to achieve a desirable future for their community,” which involves the “evolution and promotion of community goals and potential.”⁶⁰

Commuting patterns: Published by the **Census Bureau**, the study of such statistics as the percentage of individuals that work within their County of residence, their average travel time to work, the time of day that individuals leave home for work, and their mode of transportation.

Comparative advantage: When comparing two locations, this term is used to state that one location is preferable to another regarding a particular indicator.

Comprehensive plan: Created to coordinate long-term policies based on population and economic trends regarding such components of development as the economy, **land use**, natural and historic resources, community facilities, and **infrastructure**.

Consumer price index: Published by the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, a measure of the change in price for the consumer that occurs for a particular good or service in a particular place over a period of time.

Cost of living index: Published by **ACCRA**, a measure of the price of goods and services in an area based on the national average, enabling an analyst to compare the price of such necessities as groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, and health care

⁶⁰ Kaiser, Edward John and David R. Godschalk. “Development Planning.” *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: International City/County Management Association, 2000) 141.

from one location to another.

Crime rate: Published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the rate is usually calculated as the number of criminal offenses per 1,000 people. Unless otherwise specified, the **crime rate** includes both personal and property crimes. Personal crimes are such acts as murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crimes are such acts as burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft.

Demographic information: Demography is the study of human populations. *Market Street* collects demographic data pertaining to certain key characteristics of a community including population size, **age distribution**, **race** and **ethnic** composition, etc.

Displaced workers: Individuals who have lost their position because a business closed, moved elsewhere, or laid off workers due to a shift in the amount or nature of its employment needs.

Disposable income: After-tax income available for saving or spending.

Domestic migration: Published by the **Census Bureau**, the net change in the number of individuals moving into and out of a community from another location within the United States (sometimes also referred to as internal migration). **See also Net Migration and International Migration.**

Earnings: The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** defines **Earnings** as “remuneration (pay, wages) of a worker or group of workers for services performed during a specific period of time. The term invariably carries a defining word or a combination; e.g., straight-time average hourly earnings...”

Hourly, daily, weekly, annual--period of time to which earnings figures, as stated or computed, relate. The context in which annual earnings (sometimes weekly earnings) are used may indicate whether the reference includes earnings from one employer only or from all employment plus other sources of income;

Average--usually the arithmetic **mean**; that is, total earnings (as defined) of a group of workers (as identified) divided by the number of workers in the group;

Gross--usually total earnings, before any deductions (such as tax withholding) including, where applicable, overtime payments, shift differentials, production bonuses, cost-of-living allowances, commissions, etc.;

Straight-time--usually gross earnings excluding overtime payments and (with variations at this point) shift differentials and other monetary payments.” **See also Wages.**

Earnings to employment ratio: A comparison of total **earnings** to total **employment** in a given **employment sector** in order to determine which sectors provide the higher paying jobs in the local economy.

Economic development: Creating and sustaining economic activity through such methods as job retention, new business recruitment, and encouragement of entrepreneurial activity in a community. The goal of such efforts is to improve the wealth of the area and develop a strong economic base to ensure long-term prosperity.

Educational attainment: Published by the **Census Bureau**, the statistics used to measure the education levels of a community. Usually the categorized data is illustrated as a percentage of the total population over 25 years old. In each category (i.e., no high school diploma, high school diploma, some college, associate degree, Bachelor's degree, graduate or professional degree), the statistic is referring to the percentage of the population that achieved at most that particular level.

Employment: The total number of individuals that currently have a job. The **Bureau of Economic Analysis**, **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, and the **Census Bureau** publish employment data.

Employment sectors: The classification of the types of businesses in an economy by general categories. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines that classification with the **North American Industry Classification System** (previously with the **Standard Industry Classification**). The **Bureau of Economic Analysis**, **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, and the **Census Bureau** publish employment sector data.

Enterprise: The conglomeration of all the **establishments** owned by a single firm, government, or non-profit.

Entrepreneur: According to the National Commission on Entrepreneurship, "Entrepreneurs are people who take advantage of innovative ideas, and turn those ideas into jobs and wealth creation." The development of entrepreneurial activity is the "practice of encouraging the creation and growth of start-up companies."

Establishment: The location at which business activity takes place. In this context, business activity is the provision of a good or service.

Ethnicity: In order to account for the fact that Hispanic is an ethnicity and not a **race**, the **Census Bureau** collects data on the number of people in the United States who classify themselves as part of the Hispanic ethnic group. Hispanic individuals can classify themselves as any **race**, and each **race** may include both Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

High school completion rate: A measure of the percentage of young adults who have received a high school diploma. The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics further defines the rate as "based on the population of young adults ages 18 through 24 who are no longer enrolled in high school or below." The state-level departments of education sometimes determine the rate using a different standard.

High school dropout rate: A measure of the percentage of young adults who left high school before receiving a diploma.

Income: The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** glossary states: “Income before taxes is the total money **earnings** and selected money receipts of all consumer unit members 14 years of age or over during the 12 months [period]. It includes the following components: **Wages** and salaries; self-employment income; Social Security, private and government retirement; interest, dividends, rental income, and other property income; unemployment, workers’ compensation and veteran’s benefits; **public assistance**, supplemental security income, and food stamps; regular contributions for support (including alimony and child support); other income (including cash scholarships, fellowships or stipends not based on working, and meals and rent as pay).”

Inflation: The rise in prices as the value of money decreases over time.

Infrastructure: See **Physical infrastructure and Social infrastructure**.

Input-output analysis: A method of determining economic impacts. The “input,” usually the amount of financial **investment** in a project, is multiplied by a predetermined multiplier to calculate the “output,” or expected total revenue generated by that investment.

Internal migration: See **Domestic migration**.

International migration: Published by the **Census Bureau**, the net change in the number of individuals moving into and out of a community from outside of the United States. See also **Net migration and Domestic migration**.

Investments: Money spent on a good or service in order to improve existing **infrastructure** or service as well as to potentially generate future economic reward for the community or business based on that **investment**.

Labor force: The number of individuals employed or unemployed and actively seeking employment. This does not include those who are of working age, but have taken themselves out of the labor force because they, for example, are independently wealthy, retired early, raise children, or stopped looking for a job because they could not find a suitable opportunity. The **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, which publishes this data, defines the labor force based on individuals meeting these criteria who are 16 years old or over. See also **Workforce**.

Labor force participation rate: The percentage of the **workforce** (all individuals 18 – 69 years old) that is currently in the **labor force** (all individuals currently employment or unemployed and actively seeking employment). This percentage does not include those who are of working age, but have taken themselves out of the **labor force** because they, for example, are independently wealthy, retired early, raise

children, or stopped looking for a job because they could not find a suitable opportunity.

Land use: The purpose of a parcel of land based on the kind of activity that takes place on that land, usually defined by the buildings on that parcel, or lack thereof. For example, residential, commercial, office, industrial and parkland are also considered **land uses**. Typically the development of land is governed by zoning and other government regulations.

Location quotient: A measure of the portion an **employment sector** represents of the total economy for the area under consideration compared to the portion that **employment sector** represents of the United States' total economy. A location quotient of 1.0 indicates that sector represents the same proportion of the local economy as it does of the national economy. A location quotient above or below 1.0 indicates the sector represents a larger or smaller proportion, respectively, of the local economy than it does of the national economy.

Mean: More commonly referred to as the average, the **Mean** is the sum of all the data divided by the total number of pieces of data.

Median: In an ordered data series, it is the figure that falls in the middle of the series. This is different than the **Mean**, or average, of the terms.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): The total suburban and urban area of a City or urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for statistical purposes. To qualify, a City must have at least 50,000 people or the urbanized area must have at least 50,000 with a broader metropolitan area population of at least 100,000. For example, in 2000 the population of the City of Atlanta was 416,474 while the 28-County Atlanta MSA population was 4,112,198.

Migration: To change residence from one location to another. **See Domestic Migration, International Migration, and Net Migration.**

Mixed-use development: Properties integrating residential, commercial, office, or industrial **land uses** in a single development or district.

Natural change: Published by the **Census Bureau**, the net change in the population due to births and deaths in the community.

Net migration: The sum of the net **domestic** and net **international migration**.

New Economy: The information and knowledge-based economy that has rapidly and recently evolved due to the technology-driven shift in our capabilities. The national downward trend in the manufacturing sector and the upward trend in the professional services sector is a defining characteristic of the **New Economy**.

Non-farm proprietor: A proprietor is the owner of a business or other **establishment**. The **Bureau of Economic Analysis** publishes the total non-farm proprietor figure, which excludes all farm owners from the total proprietor figure in order to measure non-agriculture based business activity. *Market Street* uses the non-farm proprietorship data as a measure of the amount of **entrepreneurial** activity in a community.

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS): A system standardized by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in order to categorize business establishments in broad sectors as well as more defined sub sectors. Established in 1997, the NAICS code is an updated and reorganized version of the **Standard Industry Classification**.

Not seasonally adjusted: Published by the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, raw employment data that has not been altered to reflect fluctuations that tend to follow the same pattern each year. **See also Seasonally adjusted.**

Owner-occupied housing units: A housing unit that has a current occupant owning that particular dwelling. The **Census Bureau** measures homeownership by calculating the percentage of total housing units that are owner-occupied.

Payroll: See Average Annual Pay.

Per capita income: Published by the **Bureau of Economic Analysis** (BEA), an economic statistic considered to be one of the best overall indicators of local wealth. To calculate, BEA divides the total income earned in a given year by the total number of residents, including children, seniors, and other individuals not working. In its analysis, *Market Street* adjusts historical data based on **inflation** to determine the real per capita income.

Physical infrastructure: The shared physical resources of a community needed for its own survival and success, often provided by a local, state, or federal government entity. Examples include highway and road systems, pipelines and electrical wires, libraries, classrooms, and hospitals. **See also Social infrastructure.**

Poverty rate: The percentage of the population with a total family income below the poverty level, or threshold, as defined by the **Census Bureau**. The Bureau updates that level annually based on the **Consumer Price Index**, and that level varies by the total number of people within the family. For example, in 2003 the poverty threshold for a family of one was \$8,980 but it was \$30,960 for a family of eight.

Producer price index: A measure of the change in price for the producer that occurs for a particular good or service in a particular place over a period of time.

Public assistance: Government financial payments to individuals in need of assistance due to factors such as income levels, age, and health. It also includes government financial payments to businesses and other establishments that have demonstrated a

need for help.

Quality of life: An overall, subjective measure of an individual's satisfaction with life. This can include such factors as an individual's perception of the affordability of necessary goods and services, transportation options, air and water quality, educational opportunities, health care quality, feelings of safety, entertainment and recreational offerings, etc.

Race: A self-classification of a distinct geographic, cultural, or physical population. In 2000 the **Census Bureau** listed the following options to choose from in the decennial census questionnaire: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some other race, and Two or more races. **See also Ethnicity.**

Redevelopment: The renewal of an existing community, usually requiring a large financial investment in order to restore/improve the physical and economic health of the area.

Retirement income: Money paid to retirees from such sources as benefit pension plans and contribution retirement plans. Typically, such as in the case of the **Census Bureau's income** distribution statistics, **retirement income** does not include Social Security benefits, which are considered a **transfer payment.**

Salaries: **See Wages and salaries.**

Seasonally adjusted: Changes to employment data based on fluctuations that tend to follow the same pattern each year. These adjustments are made in order to more effectively illustrate atypical trends that occur. **See also Not seasonally adjusted.**

Skilled workers: Adults with the education and skill sets to meet current and future job requirements. The term applies to all industries and occupations.

Small business: A business that has fewer employees or generates less revenue than a certain level. That level varies by industry. The U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Size Standards determines those levels for the purpose of administering their assistance programs.

Social infrastructure: The community organizations, networks, and other social resources that are needed for a geographic area's survival and success.

Standard Industry Classification (SIC): A system standardized by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in order to categorize businesses and other establishments in broad sectors as well as more defined sub sectors. In 1997, OMB updated and reorganized the data in a new system called the **North American Industry Classification System.**

Sustainability: In the context of *Market Street's* work, it is the economic prosperity that is achieved when measures are taken to ensure long-term, not just short-term, economic success. Sustainable economic vitality also must recognize the interdependence of the environment and the economy.

Tax abatement: A common economic development tool of governments, it permits business-owners to not pay taxes for a certain period of time.

Teenage pregnancy live birth rate: The number of live births per 1,000 female teenagers, published by the National Center for Health Statistics, a division of the Center for Disease Control. The age range is usually 15 – 19. The figure does not include miscarriages and early terminations.

Time series analysis: The study of historical data over a certain period of time, often to compare that specific geographic area to others, the state, or the nation.

Transfer payments: Government financial assistance such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, workers' compensation, and aid to dependent children.

Unemployment: Published by the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, the total number of people that are without a job, but still within the **labor force** because they are actively seeking a position.

Unemployment rate: Published by the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, the percentage of the **labor force** that is currently without a job.

Venture capital: Private equity investments in new start-ups or expansions of **small businesses**. Investors receive shares in the company, a degree of management control, or a specified share of profits.

Wages and salaries: The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** defines **Wages** as, "Hourly straight-time wage rate or, for workers not paid on an hourly basis, straight-time **earnings** divided by the corresponding hours. Straight-time wage and salary rates are total earnings before payroll deductions, excluding premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends and holidays, shift differentials, and nonproduction bonuses such as lump-sum payments provided in lieu of wage increases." **See also Earnings.**

Workforce: Often referred to as the "potential workforce," *Market Street* defines it as all individuals ages 18 – 69. **See also Labor force.**